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Behind Bars

Essie P. Graham

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practice, as we witness more of life, we can't help but change in certain ways. I'm constantly learning new things, new ways of doing things, meeting new people. And, I'm also guilty of creating new forms, many of those being syllable count forms. I have a book of Sufi poetry titled *Stirring Goldfish*, which is coming out May 7th, by Finishing Line Press.

I stumbled upon an old book by Bahu at Recycled Bookstore in Denton, and it was a treasure. So, I spent months learning the Sufi poetry form. It's deceptively simple looking, but difficult for a modern western thinker like me to wrap her brain around an ancient, middle-eastern poetry form! But I did, and it changed my view of the world yet again. These Sufi poems are tiny love letters between man and woman and man and God – a mix of the earthly and the eternal, the sensual and the spiritual.

DC: You've been charmingly open about your past rejection letters, insisting that you could "wallpaper" your whole house with them. What words of encouragement can you offer to aspiring poets and writers of all ages who have also experienced a great deal of rejection?

KM: This may sound simple, but I tell you – DON'T GIVE UP! You have to have a strong backbone to be a writer, because so much of it is an individual taste. You put three people in a room, and you will have three different ideas about your work. I have a plaque in my bathroom with that famous quote by Winston Churchill: "Never, never, never give up." Good words to live by.

DC: What else inspires, motivates, and drives Karla Morton? What bigger-than-life dreams do you have - and do they include other collaborations similar to the epic poetry and music project you completed in 2007?

KM: I have a fascination with life. My husband often asks me what color the sky is in my world, but I believe you have to have a sense of wonder, a sense of imagination. Why be bound by reality? I am inspired by nature, by other poets, by music, by a need to be all I was put on this earth to be. I want to take "Wee Cowrin' Timorous Beastie" to stage. I want to put together an event with other Texas Poets Laureate at performance halls. I want to raise up poetry in the public's eyes – even showcasing the Laureates in such venues as in the permanent library in the future Museum of Texas Arts and Culture (which is in the works in Denton by the Greater Denton Arts Council).

I want to write into my 90's. I want to publish so many books that my friends dread the next Christmas. I want to walk this earth in my new Leddy's custom boots (with the hand-tooled shaft and a laurel wreath around a Texas star) into every section of Texas, every state in the United States, and every other country that calls my name. I want to kick life in the teeth, to dance at my grandchildren's weddings.

I want to wake up each morning with the love of my life at my side, and laugh every single day.

I want, just like the *Man of LaMancha*, to... *dream the impossible dream.*

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For more information about Karla Morton's events and projects, visit her website: www.kkmorton.com



Behind Bars Essie P. Graham

In Camera 102, Hotel de San Francesco

Karla Morton

I think of you,
in that corner room,
where flowered papers
soften 500-year-old walls...

Our love blooms
thick and tangible;
like silent sweat on skin;
lips moving in their own language;

pale sheers, a sanctuary –
holding back the world...

And across the street,
across cobblestones toed
by barefoot saints,
sits a chapel...

ancient doors and ten million prayers
padding the archways...

In there, our hands would clasp
together again,

our tongues, remembering the silence –
the taste of all things holy.