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When Pigs Fly #1 and #2

Ava Everett

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DC: In today's rushed, multi-tasking world, do you believe that poetry has therapeutic - perhaps even curative - powers?

KM: I think today, poetry and the written word are even *more* important. I think it settles us, brings us back into the mindset of what really matters in this world. It grounds us and makes us whole, and brings us rest. There's a church in Dallas that just bought pieces of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and paid a fortune for them, I'm sure. Why is that? Because words are our *history*; words are our *future*. They give us the tools to quietly seek that great Voice inside each one of us...and I believe *that* is the greatest of healing powers.

DC: You've discussed the enormous significance of "giving back" a portion of what we've been given in this life. How does that influence your poetry?

KM: That's a good question, but honestly hard to answer, because I don't write poetry with an audience in mind. I write for the sake of the words, for the story, for the emotion that is tied into it.

I wrote a poem, titled *Picking Up the Accent*, which is about how *everything* shapes us, how we "ingest every experience," how everything we've done "...seeps into the bone, curves the hand around the pen..." I think who we are, and what we believe in can't help but come out in our writing.

DC: As Texas Poet Laureate, you've committed yourself to a project called the "Little Town, Texas Tour" across the state, during which you will be visiting many small towns, some described as

possibly "underserved" in the arts. When your position comes to a close, what do you hope to have accomplished through this mission?

KM: I want to lift up poetry to kids and adults – if even for just one hour of their lives. I want them to see how important poetry and the arts are; I want them to see how *fun* it can be, how it can *enrich* their lives. I want them to crave this kind of beauty every day in their hearts.

DC: During your tour thus far, has an experience with a particular place or person encouraged and confirmed that you chose the right project as Texas Poet Laureate?

KM: Oh, there are so many cities, towns and villages that have left an impact on me – and how can that be? Here I am trying to give something of beauty to them, yet I'm the one who ends up being so blessed! One place in particular, however, stands out so far – Hardin, Texas (in Liberty County). It's a tiny place that brought me into their homes and schools; a place that understands what community and neighbor is all about; a place that made me fall in love with Texas all over again.

DC: Tell us how you and photographer Walter Eagleton decided on the photographs for your book *Redesigning Beauty* – the work that chronicles all sides of tackling breast cancer.

KM: Well, that was Walter's magic. I was on the Square in Denton one day – bald head o'shining – and Walter said to come into his studio; we were going to take some pictures. I had lost my hair from the chemo, but not my eyebrows and eyelashes yet. He is an amazing photographer, who sees beauty in a whole

different way, and the way he captured that time in my life was something, we hoped, could be passed on to others.

DC: Our society has an obvious and relentless love affair with beauty. How would you counter or comment on that?

KM: Absolutely! What we see on TV and in the magazines is just crazy, and we can so easily buy into the idea that THAT is what real beauty is. But there is so much more – our lives are so much *more* than what is on the outside. In the title poem of *Redefining Beauty*, I compare true beauty to the love of two eels – those creatures of the deep, where everything and every being is "...blind by Divine design..." It's more than what we see. *Beauty* is who we really are.

DC: Out of all the poems you've written, do you have a favorite one – and why?

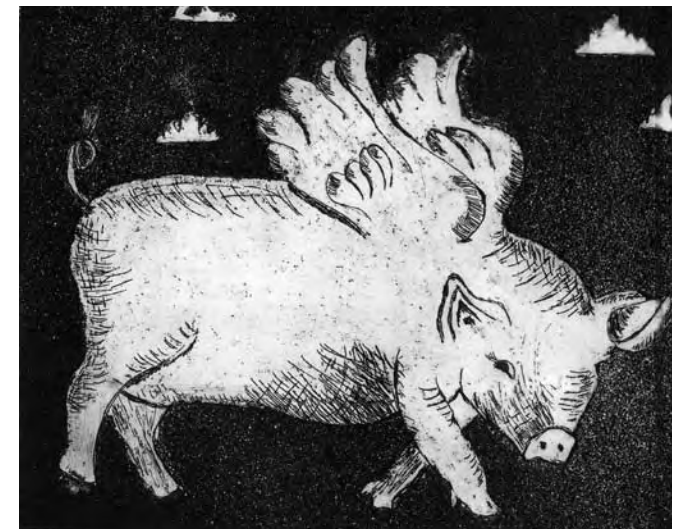
KM: Gosh, you know, sometimes they become like your children, and it's hard to choose between them, but one of my favorites is "*For Love and Michelangelo*" because it combines my love of storytelling with the emotions of love, timelessness...okay, and a little lust!

DC: How has the tone and direction changed in your newest books (*Becoming Superman* and *Names We've Never Known*) changed?

KM: I'm still doing what I do, but...as I write – as we write, as we gain more



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