

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.*