

FIELDS OF ROMANTIC ORDEAL

by Deborah Qualle
The Compass

The enticement on the back cover is reason enough to read the new volume of poems from Katherine Gordon.

"Entice your favourite knight or lady / To take you galloping on a hopeless quest / Through the fields of romantic ordeal.

Seeking the ideal is perilous / But the rough journey exhilarating."

Gordon draws on a broad background of knowledge to write about a variety of subjects. It's difficult to pick out poems or passages from stories for review purposes when each individual has such varied taste. Several of Gordon's poems spring to mind immediately and fit well: "Wild Garden of the Elements" is one such piece, with its lovely lines of imagery.

"Planted by the alchemy of autumn / Winnowed by the teasing winds of spring."

"Negotiating with Angels" is also particularly beautiful, involving the discussion of death and the author's wish to stay with the wild parts of the valley she loves. In so doing, the angels must incorporate her molecules into "wings of birds and butterflies / Some to fleet forms of shy river creatures... / A little portion to the fairies / Who work their magic here."

Many of the works carry warnings or messages; many are tidings of beauty and light. All, however, move the reader to

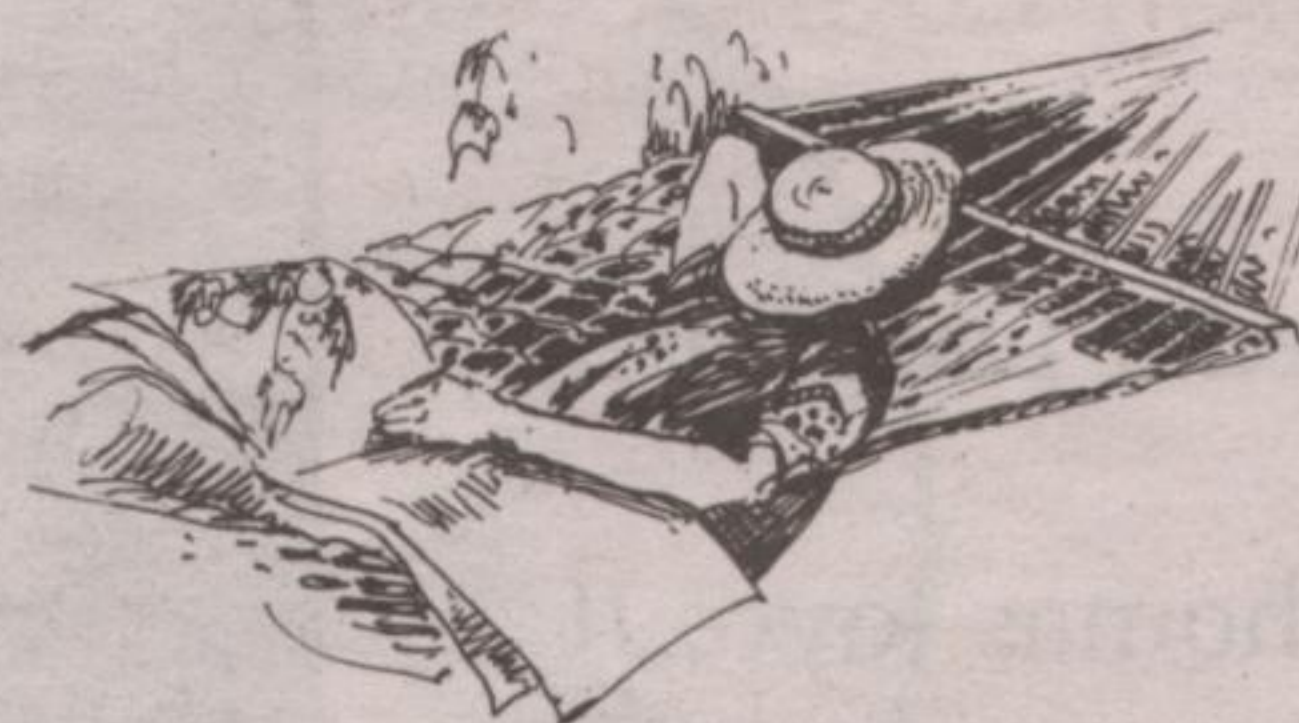
reconsider the message tucked within. Gordon's poems are conceived with startling clarity, and those most important to each individual should be reread, savoured and contemplated.

The cover design for *Saving Camelot* and an illustration withing the book are by Melissa Wyness, "an artist who often paints the medieval with a timeless understanding of the symbols of our psyche that span the ages of human experience." The graphics, design, layout and natuescape photography are by Jennifer Gordon, Katherine's daughter, who is a writer, photographer and radio show host living in Guelph. There is also a nicely composed photo inside by Lisa Steckly.

Katherine Gordon is Vice President and Guelph area chair for the Canadian Poetry Association, and works to promote poetry and support our writers. She contributes regularly to anthologies and periodicals, writes book reviews, and judges emerging writers for the Arts Council. *Saving Camelot* is well worth a relaxed read on a winter's night.

SAVING CAMELOT
KATHERINE L. GORDON
2000: R.R.#5, ROCKWOOD, ON
SOFTCOVER
90 PGS., WITH ILLUSTRATIONS
ISBN 0-9682733-2-7

Idle



Pursuits

GIVIN' YOU THE DIRT: SEED CATALOGUE SEASON

by Sean James
The Compass

Once heard winter defined as "lasting from the first snowfall to the arrival of the first seed catalogue." Catalogues are arriving in droves, so I can almost smell the daffodils. Seeds represent optimism and a fresh start.

If you're new at this, start with easy seeds like tomatoes or annual Cosmos. Some catalogues will even list which seeds are easy to grow. My biggest mistake every year is buying more than I can plant, so I try to limit myself to three or four packets. Even then I don't plant all the seeds they send. I usually only plant a couple of cell packs of each type. Cell packs are the six-part boxes annuals are sold in. In most cases, that will give me more plants than I can use.

There are two main ways to go when purchasing seeds. If you're just getting started you can buy plants that will help your garden fill in quickly and easily, such as the perennial Lupins, Hollyhocks or Delphinium. You may be surprised to find that even Clematis are easy to grow from seed. If you have a new perennial garden you may wish to grow easy annuals such as California Poppies or Nicotiana. This is a cheap way to fill in spaces in your garden. If you have some experience you can select exotic or hard-to-find plants to make your garden more exceptional. If you

fail, don't be disheartened. You only blew a couple of bucks. That's part of the beauty of seeds.

Catalogues can be very educational since they offer concentrated information on how to germinate the seeds, how the plants grow in the garden, and what conditions they thrive under. Colourful pictures often accompany these descriptions. Beware of the pictures! Sometimes reality will not meet the spectacular images. A few less reputable companies even doctor their photos. I was looking through one and found a rose for sale in the richest purple I had ever seen. I was about to order when I noticed the sky in the photo was purple also. They had tinted the entire photo!

If you're not equipped for growing seedlings, many catalogues sell all the paraphernalia you need,

such as soil, pots, tools and even lighted plant stands. Some even offer books that will help you get started. Funny thing is, this whole article is about something I'm terrible at. I'm great at germinating the seeds but I lack the discipline to give them the important after-care they need like watering. The best you can do is to buy quality seeds and plant in a good, sterile soil mix. Give them the right light and if possible, bottom heat to help them germinate. Give them everything they need to germinate but if you don't water them, they're not going to live. I successfully germinated many rare Himalayan Blue Poppy seeds. A triumph! But I killed every single one by not watering the.

Remember the basics!

Sean James is a Campbellville resident and a graduate of Niagara Parks horticulture school.

PORTFOLIOS AND MORE

Interested in studying fine art, graphics, animation, film, illustration, fashion or architecture at a Canadian college or university? The Guelph Arts Council is hosting Portfolios and More, a presentation on Monday, February 5 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Nan Hogg, a local artist and teacher, will present information to young people interested in a career in art.

"There is fierce competition for places in many of these post-secondary programs. To be accepted, students must present both their artwork and themselves in a very professional manner. The aim of the presentation is to show them how."

Some of the topics that Hogg will touch upon include choosing the work for a portfolio; presenting a portfolio, preparing slides and photographs; handling exam assignments; writing a letter of intent or an essay; and answering difficult interview questions.

Participants are encouraged to register early. The registration fee is \$15 in advance. To register, visit the Guelph Art Council office, 147 Wyndham Street North, Suite 404, Guelph. Office hours are Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information call 519-836-3280.



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Valentine's Day

Wednesday, February 14: Two seatings 5:30 p.m. & 8:30 p.m. Special Valentine's Day Menu will include appetizer choices, main course choices (e.g. Entrecote for two), dessert, tea or coffee. Cost \$49.50 per person (Taxes & gratuities not included). Note: regular menu will not be offered). Reservations.

Valentine's Week

Thursday, February 15 through Saturday, February 17, our Special Valentine's Menu will be offered as well as our regular menu.

Cajun Celebration

Sunday, February 25 and Sunday March 4. Our annual (eight years running!) Cajun Feast with live Dixieland Jazz Band will be held starting at Noon. Reservations are REQUIRED! Cost \$40.25 per person.

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