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presents

Life In A Bottle

short fiction by Matthew W. Schmeer

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<poetink@inlink.com>

Poetry Ink Productions
Attn: Matthew W. Schmeer
6711-A Mitchell Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63139

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Life In A Bottle

Matthew W. Schmeer

There was, he thought, a certain ironic humor in the way she died. Not that it was funny she was dead; just that slipping on a bar of soap when she was never known to have taken a bath was strange. She was the type most men avoided—and for a good reason. She stank. A real rank, moldy, musty, moth-ball, dirt-ground, coffee-stained, wet-dog smell.

But he loved her.

She, on the other hand, hated him with a burning passion which was magnified every time she saw him. Theirs was what you could call a conditional relationship, on the condition that you realized no relationship existed.

He once wrote her a poem that she had in her hat when she died. It was about his love for her and why he loved her. Here it is in its entirety:

The love for you I hold is rare
And never is it truer
Than when I get real close to you
And realize you reek like a sewer.

This smell you have just turns me on
I know that we must kiss;
Just thinking about this belated union
Puts me in a state of bliss.

The roses on a thorn bush
The sky hidden in the clouds
Cannot compare to the thrill I get
When you fart real loud.

His ability to write beautiful verse was the only reason she stayed near him, for his words filled her with inner peace that she could usually only find rooting through trash dumpsters. He was the only stable thing in her life beside the endless stream of happiness that leaked from her eyes when she was depressed.

She died quickly after seven months of pure hellish suffering, during which he went through therapy for people who wish they were not so normal. There was, he once said, a bizarre reason for the state of nothingness he felt. She was the reason, and now she was dead.

He did not weep when she died. Instead, he celebrated by getting drunk on catnip and throwing furniture out his car windows. He was emotionally shattered, and the mirror of his soul was fractured when they laid her to rest under the spiraling maple trees in the apartment courtyard.

It was several months later when he finally cracked, taking his own life by bending over the toilet bowl and banging himself on the head with the lid. He drowned almost instantaneously.

The Tidy Bowl Man, however, had to visit a shrink for several months to get over his guilt.