

*Silver Thoughts;*

*Poetry and Early Writings*

## A Lonely Soul

A lonely soul is mine  
Grown hard and wise with the essence of time,  
Though I feel how sweet life can be,  
Still my soul longs to be free.  
Lonely and wandering,  
Yet happy and content  
Time with Odysseus is time well spent.  
I laugh I cry I live alone  
But I will not run, my soul is my home.  
It has its own depth; its anguish is pure,  
Just to sip that sweet hemlock, I would need no more.  
For just once drinking deep of that mad medicine  
How could I seek the cruel world again?

August 1993

## Angel Touch

Fear struck to me last night  
When I was most unbroken.  
For so cold it ran and bled through me,  
No words could ever have spoken.  
The moon was high, night in its prime,  
When I idly did stray to my haven of light,  
But no were could I have hid myself  
From that dreadful feeling of fright.  
So I childishly held her maternal wings  
For her crimson feathers soothe me well,  
And my comforter did free me  
From the reek of societies hell.

Heavens fear did touch me, and she died as dawn came alive.

But for now I will stay in her musical parlour, for the hunger of loneliness here must  
writhe.

1993

## Song to Sappho

Lesbos is a beautiful place to see the stars...  
Purple Nightingale of stability.  
Lesbos is a beautiful place to love...  
Azure Night of still delight.  
Lesbos is a beautiful place to fall...  
Green Sea of tranquillity.  
Lesbos is a beautiful place to cut a lock of your hair...  
White Marble of eternal night.  
Pretty maidens come...place your gentle gems  
Upon the tomb.

1996

Thought

My own mind  
Like every Angel  
Terrifies me

1997

My Waking Eyes may Never See

I wish the dead would rest.  
I did not let her over take me.  
Her dark eyes chill my breast,  
My waking eyes may never see.

I dreamed she was alive,  
And smiling she approached me.  
Her hand was warm with life,  
Her smile was warm and free.

I felt her arms around me  
And Ruby's blood still flowed  
But with deceitful life of sleep  
Was her skin white like snow.

I wake and weep and weep,  
Retire her again to that lifeless slope,  
And wonder that why, when I sleep  
She torments me with hollow hope.

Sleep indeed brings no peace to me,  
The unknown surrounds my darksome bed.  
And from heavy blankets smothering me,  
I'm terrified to raise my head...

It's a scene rein acted almost every night,  
As I wake in the stillness, I feel her near.

And my poor heart breaks for fright,  
Till I wish her dead, and gone the fear.

I wish the dead would rest,  
I did not let her overtake me.  
Her dark eyes chill my breast,  
My waking eyes may never see.

1997

Alive

There is no life in  
Communing with the dead,  
So from her white skin  
I turn my tired head.

She lives behind a piece of glass,  
A lovely still to look upon.  
But cold to the last,  
Trapped and framed, my Ruby is gone.

I'm almost very frightened to gaze  
into your almond eyes,  
you knew secrets that were base,  
you knew all the lies.

You knew deceitful things the most,  
And how I hate you for that.  
And yet you new how to give up the ghost,  
And how I envy you that.

There is no hell my love  
In which you burn,  
For here is hell above,  
And look, it's Laura's turn.

No. I'll talk to you no longer,  
For you terrify me.  
But daily I will grow stronger  
In what you ceased to Be...

## Paper Cut

I made love to lord Byron.  
It just happened.  
Two of us sitting quietly,  
“when night makes a strange sound  
of its own stillness”,  
his eloquent words seducing  
my virgin mind.  
Suddenly Beppo blushed an ethereal crimson  
As Laura turned the page,  
And besmeared his immortality  
With a maroon lament, moving  
The tiny cut epistle over his firmness.  
I made love to my lord and  
I have the bloodstained sheets  
To show that it wasn't just  
A consummation  
In my pretty little head.

1998

G. Felix C. the last lament

Your eyes blue integrity, your starry grey hair,  
And the lustre of your smiling face,  
Are from contemplation serene, embedded in my memory.

Sorrows softness charms from me despair.  
Having thrown such moody sadness to your airs...  
Your melancholy's shut me out, how unfair.

O let me be your secret sorrow, or the essence  
Of that gentle sigh. Let me torment your nights  
For then I'll never die.

For my every existence is bound in you,  
In your great mind, in those round eyes of blue.  
Felix! From my sensitive dark lashes seeping,  
You've made such mad angels flee with weeping.

Your youth, those charms, that honesty,  
Drives frenzy from my eyes over you.  
And still your heart is silent and blue,  
While mine burns white heat, aching for you.

## The song of Keith

There is an essence about you Keith,  
The sound of your name revives it,  
To live again in my memory  
Like the vibration of a fading note.

Don't despise me because of my sickness,  
Because I have been rejected.  
For my sisters were bitter against me,  
And sent me to swim amongst the wine.

Tormented and cold night after night,  
My mind gave animation to your voice.  
And I sought you while I roamed in my flowerbeds  
Till the guardian of my fancy rent my veil.

And he made me dance a tiresome dance  
While all the while you called from the delta.  
Then I found you down there, wet and forlorn,  
Then your love came through me like wine through water.

Keith, your eyes are as dark as dates,  
And round and overwhelming, like the night  
Of cloudless black and clear still air,  
When the sensitive moon graces her lonely climb.

My Keith's hair is wavy and flaxen,  
It smells sweet, like sunrise in palmy gardens.  
His body is as a doves washed in milk.  
But it's Keith's smile that's the lily I dare not gild.

Oh how I long that you were my brother,  
And that we had shared the same womb.  
My right hand would kiss you, my left could undress you,  
And my body, play the meek cedar of Lebanon

To be felled and trampled, made submissive with wine.  
And the left will not know that the right has found peace,  
Nor the buyers that I have found wealth.

O Keith please take me into your grandfathers house, and make a beggar a queen.

Letter to the Broken Ones

My mother. And you are not my mother,  
You ran from me, your own.  
Drank me into the arms of another,  
So I could hate her, for what you've done.

My father, how could you lay and stare.  
Your little girl still cries for a daddy  
To grow up and collect her from here,  
From the silent man she hates in your place.

My sisters, yes I've lost a few of those.  
Some by their own hands, a couple by mine.  
Emerald, ruby's blood is upon your clothes  
And you worship the holy stains grown black from time.

My Family. Family, what the hell is that?  
I've never experienced the like of a family,  
The one, because it was torn from my heart.  
The other, because it was rejected by me.

## The Untouchable Ones

Ruby Ann of the untouchables.  
Just a dreamed up fantasy  
Like all the fathers I've never known,  
And the sisters I'll never see.

One day, her lungs were filled with water  
Eleven years ago,  
Soon becomes twenty without a father,  
And still no place to go.

To long for acceptance  
From the eyes of a stranger  
But find old rejection  
Still haunting my manger.

Of my dads, the dark eyed ones  
I've only met a few.  
Most, made from books or Canadian songs,  
For dads are untouchable too.

My dads are untouchable too.

To the Far Off Man Who is Not My Father

You look like you could make a good father  
I revealed to your Mind.  
You seem like you must be a fine man  
I implored of your Eyes.  
Do you feel like loving a young daughter into existence  
I begged of your Sex.  
“I’m a father of Sounds and Words and  
Not the product of unnatural rejection”  
Shot your Mind through my sanctuary.  
“I’m a man of French Passion but Canadian Reserve”  
Slashed your Eyes at my soul.  
“My children the result of Technical Genius  
Not nurtured deprivation nor chemical urges”.  
Speared your Sex into my heart.

1999

## The Chosen One-A Warning

The chosen one knows no family,  
In the midst of mothers and aunts.  
And her brothers, no thicker than ink,  
Upon writ yellowed documents.

The chosen one chooses no home,  
But the dwelling which is her mind.  
And here she will walk, on south western sands,  
As the tide of life forces her along.

She will reject any father you give her,  
For the one she cannot touch, out west.  
She will make just fine, with his unknown face,  
Hung carefully behind her shelves.

To the chosen one is given no mate,  
To help heal the wound of dejection.  
For this one is doomed to go it alone.  
And her name is writ on water.

November 1999

## Capuchin Sisters Falling Apart

They stand as one mass,  
Merged with the night;  
A brown smear of hypocrisy  
Above the shy white light of truth.

They prey together, corrupted and proud,  
Nursing barren daggers in obese wombs  
Grown putrid from stillborn ambitions,  
While swaddled in black mantels of lofty ideals.

But one falls apart...  
Her wall rent and felled.  
And in the silent pitch of aloneness,  
She is now an oasis.

2002

Saturnino

Sing softly Saturnino...  
The Tronto it glistens  
The wind, it listens  
As it blows from far Urbino,

To that soft enchantment  
As you sing through sweet lips  
Lulling with gentle fingertips,  
Music that's more than enhancement.

As you bewitch with your eyes  
You make nature your slave,  
And poor hungry souls crave,  
The beauty that in you lies.

But give me one glance  
And my heart will aspire  
To your great and dark fire,  
There to burn and take its last chance.

S. C.; Dark Eyes I

In your dark eyes  
A presence like light does lie.  
I'm broken down most willingly  
In that soft and conquering glance,  
Torn happily into a thousand universes  
All containing that sweet celestial essence,  
Which is time and beauty itself.  
It creates and destroys.  
It breeds love and torments.  
In just one soft and dark look.

2005

S. C.; Dark Eyes II

Walking on white sand with you  
Under a 'Smeraldan sun  
In the serenity of azurest blue  
Could almost make me speak my Love...

The darkest of Italian nights are nothing to you eyes.  
The whitest of Egyptian sands  
Are yellowed against your skin.  
the creamiest velvet is rendered coarse  
After your caress.  
Nightingales sigh silently  
After you have sung.

Your look itself is a look of love  
And its measured motion is divine.  
The parrian marble of your skin  
Shades to crimson at my touch.  
Your caress, however soft,  
Betrays firm passion within.

You need not sing,  
I need not speak.  
Walking on the hot white sand  
Is all the testament I need.  
Two shadows meeting in the 'Smeraldan sun,  
Our metaphor of love.

S. C.; Dark Eyes III

Your soft brown eyes  
Your tired and sweet sighs  
Your indifferent goodbyes and our parallel lives  
Have made me a most unworthy martyr  
To that your superlative love.

# The Gift of A Friend

A short story by Laura Whalen

1996  
reworked in 2005

*For Bryce; the best friend a girl could wish for.*

## Beginnings

Lore Angellini was sitting cross legged on the smooth, sun warmed stone floor, in the airiest room of his beloved Villa Soleluna. In the large bare room, sunshine colored ancient ivory walls to honey as it ripened bunches of purple grapes growing on the trellis outside. The only sound in the bright emptiness was from the small brown chitarra Lore held on his knee. As he played a melancholy Japanese air, Lore thought that the only thing he loved more than creating music was his sweet little sister Lili. The melancholy notes quickly became vibrant as he contemplated his unlikely life with Lili.

They once lived as a famiglia in this ancient villa on the hillside of Cortona. Lore, Lili, and two dotting parents. Life was easy then, and at 17, Lore left home for what he thought would be forever to enlist in the carboneri. Lili was happy then, she lived the normal carefree life of a seven year old, cutting olives with babbo, making pasta with mama, and running along the length of Via Della Santucce to go to school. She was tiny, dark and painfully thin, but very happy. That was when she smiled a lot, without even needing a reason to do so.

Lili stopped smiling when she was eight. That October their parents were killed on a wet Calabrian highway, and Lili was suddenly alone. Lore came back from Milano to deal with his loss, and comfort an oddly quiet Lili. As he looked into huge black, despondent eyes, he knew he could never leave her. Lore became mother and father to his depressed sister and raised her from the age of eight. Lore did everything he could to work while furthering a career in music. He toiled through radio stations, sweated in discothèques, and struggled with success, for when he was twenty one he was given the chance to write and produce his own album, and soon was a respected musician. But things were not so easy when it came to Lili. Though Lore lavished attention on her, and spent most of his days with her, Lili would not come out of herself.

Lili grew to be serious, withdrawn and melancholic. The fun of childhood was behind her, ahead she saw only sadness and loss. The only person she had to love was

Lore, and in turn she felt sure that no one could ever love her. At the age of twelve, she began to write. Her first writings were short stories for Lore to read, but her writing quickly changed to fulfil a more personal need consisting of poems and stories that she kept to herself. Lore recognised a startling depth in her writing and after having several professors and writers look then over, an uncultivated genius was confirmed. Lore was told to encourage Lili in her writing, not only was it full of gleaming potential, but it proved to be therapeutic as well.

That was three years ago. Lore looked up from his chitarra and felt the silence. He smiled as he thought of Lili upstairs in her golden room, probably writing away in the late afternoon sun. he placed his chitarra gently against the wall, and when he turned, she was there before him. Her tiny form draped all in black and her long dark hair piled onto a dainty head. She was elegant yet sad, more Jane Eyreish than Jane herself.

“I’m ready to go to the convent now.”

### To The Convent

The large and sun dried ancient convent was located in the centre of the city, not far from the piazza dell’ commune. Outside people lingered and snapped pictures, but on the inside silence ruled supreme. Lili had been coming here every Saturday for a year, and found the silence coupled with the collective love of seven sisters very calming.

Lili walked in bare feet, upon warm hardwood floors into the wooden and hot chapel, where she knelt down to kiss the floor and fell into silent prayer. Seven other forms moved silently in the small chapel, the only sounds being heard were the clicking of beads and an occasional sigh. Here Lili prayed to be wanted and loved by somebody, to be made lovable and for something to fill the tremendous void that echoed inside of her daily.

Sitting with Sister Iona in a sun and floral filled library, Lili could finally talk. Sister Iona was tall, slender and of such an earthly beauty, that one was sorry to behold only half her face which was Junoesque, and her white smooth skin was crowned by dark brown and serious eyes. She moved with superlative grace and spoke with wisdom that was beyond her comparative youth. In her thick brown Franciscan habit, she seemed as a queen. Lili felt safe and happy in the presence of this mother figure.

“Have you prayed about a vocation Lili?” Sister Iona’s eyes were serious and piercing.

“Yes, but how do I know if I have one ?”

“If you have one Lili, then you will have a very strong desire to come here.”

“Well, I do have that, but I think that’s mostly for myself. I know that nobody but god will ever be able to love me.”

“Lili, if you pray for a vocation god will give you one, he will give you all you need, friends are nothing, only god can give you everything. You can make no man love you, but your god is there in your heart, calling you.” Sister Iona smiled her radiant smile.

Lili nodded slowly, but she was not so sure.

## Buon Compleano

Lili felt most alive on days like this, when the sun was warm and the sky was clear. She walked slowly from school with Elena, and they discussed Greece and its pottery with the enthusiasm of young scholars. The white clay of Corinth and the red of Athens. Corinthian rays and zoomorphic jars from Crete. Geometric designs and Cycladic figurines in their simple elegance. Lili loved them all.

“And now there is nothing in Greece but hot air and dust” stated Elena with haughty loftiness.

“But that’s the hot air and dust from which you came” Lili smiled, but it was with an undertone of sadness, for she knew that Elena never really liked her, and was caught up in an intellectual competition with Lili in which she always had to prove herself to be Lili’s superior. Even her friends could not love her she realised, and this was the thought that consumed her most on the first day of October, her sixteenth birthday, as she walked on alone in the bright fall sun.

.....

“Buon compleanno sorellina mia”, Lore gave his Lili a small kiss, and for the first time that day, she smiled. They were sitting just the two of them in Lore’s favourite giapponese teahouse, having hippocras and wafers. Honey dripped like sweet gold into green tea and the room was filled with warm transparent topaz as the melancholy sun made way for the impatient and glittering stars. Lili almost didn’t notice when Lore put the envelope into her hand. There was no card, just two small tickets, two small red and white tickets to Greece.

“I know what it means to you.” He smiled a look of genuine love and Lili was overcome with a feeling she rarely felt, a feeling like pure joy and happiness.

## Greece

They arrived in Eleusis on October fifth, where they would stay for the next ten days. The light was the first thing about the place that struck them. The air was full of light. Touchable, ethereal light flashing against white marble and the purple noon. The blue of the bay was velvet, and luminous the green hills of Salamis lying in the setting sun’s way. Lili delighted in her room which was barren and holy in its airiness. She would lie awake with the small window open wide, an ancient breeze caressing her with

promises of better things to come. The moon, like a silver slice of something wonderful she had not tasted yet swinging celestially outside.

Caro dio, il buon tempo verra.

Il buon tempo verra.

Days later, on one of their afternoon walks, Lore and Lili came upon the church at daphni surrounded by wet fresh pines. It was very small on the outside and made of pristine red brick. Inside, its height reached to the heavens. The ancient people in the mosaics seemed to whisper hauntingly to Lili. The angel of the annunciation had his blue and rose wings touched lovingly. It was something sadly sweet to see Mary in her star encrusted gown and Joseph with his blue hair. It was absurd but beautiful.

“I guess he could love a freak like me.”

“Who could love a freak like you?” smiled Lore with feigned shock.

“God. He made me this broken, so he must love me, it is possible.”

Lore softly touched her dark hair. “No, not just god. For every planet there is a star. Remember.” When she looked into his innocent and honest green eyes Lili knew he was right.

The best times for the both of them were when they were sitting together under the crystal blue of the sky, talking about love, running their hands along smooth sun warmed marble. Lore shaking olives from a ripe, thick and generous tree and then gathering them in handfuls to share with Lili, was a memory she would treasure with all the others from this wise, and giving land.

On the evening before returning to Italy, Lili finally found the perfect thing to remember the visit that had given her so much. It was a very small and delicate silver bracelet, filled with tiny dangling stars. It was also a reminder to her, that she herself was still in silver youth, and like all stars, she would endure long enough to find love.

Late that night, sitting upon her bed, holding her silver bracelet in one hand, she was reminded of something Lore had said. Looking out the window, and focusing on the furthest but brightest star she could see, Lili spoke,

“If I am the planet then you are my star, of all I have lost, please give something good back to me, one friend, one love for me is all I ask.”

### Ascoli Piceno

The narrow medieval streets of Ascoli Piceno made Lili feel completely at home. Walking along the piazza del' popolo with Elena, through crowds and by busy shops in the piazza, she felt strangely at ease.

Slowly they would walk along the river and talk in the Caffè Meletti every day for the next two weeks while waiting for the festival on October 31. Until then Lili was more or less alone, a guest in the home of Elena's Nonna. She grew fascinated with the beautiful small town on the river Tronto, which she now explored with enthusiasm. Reading Petrarca by the Roman walls, watching the orange and purple sunsets on Annunziata Hill and walking thoughtfully along the bridge of the Porta della Cappuccina in white moonlight. There was a comforting presence in all of these surroundings which seemed so open, as though wishing to give her something good.

The evening of the festival began as Lili knew it would, with silver stars in an azure and blackening sky, and a bright half moon glowing in brisk cloudlessness. The soft yellow streets filled with people, and Lili was just one of thousands gathering in the large piazza del' popolo, to hear the music and see sparkling lights. Here Lili would have been content, but this was not to be; for Elena and possibly the stars, had other pre-designed plans for Lili.

It was Elena's idea to go to the club of il Ascolum, where she dragged a hesitant Lili into an unknown atmosphere that vibrated a common want of need and desire. Amidst filthy floors and walls black and paperless, a throng of adults drank mercilessly

and hunted those who were longing to be devoured. Music, vengeful and pulsating wildly allowed for no thought, nor conversation. In this atmosphere, instinct and desire ruled alone.

Elena almost immediately left Lili sitting in a corner on her own. Disappointed and disillusioned with her friend, Lili rose to leave quietly, and was stopped only by a dark, gentle hand touching her slender arm. Lili looked into the darkest, handsomest face she had ever yet seen. A smiling expression of eagerness emanated from him and his black eyes "like twin mirrors of an Italian heaven" paralysed Lili with awe.

"You pretty girl.....I buy you drink."

After one drink he kissed her and left her, and as numb and wobbly as she was, Lili walked again to the door to leave. This time the hand that stopped her was firm and determined. Lili looked without really seeing the hardness in shallow blue eyes and she shyly accepted the drink which he had already mixed for her, and took a reluctant sip.

With an anxious desire to get far from this broad man, Lili swallowed almost half the glass of an awful cognac mixed with some other bitter substance, and then tried to squirm free of his obsessive arms. As his arms tightened around her and his eyes stared without feeling at her face, she felt the terrible fog of sleep numb her into silent submission. She was spared the sick feeling of panic and fear as her slumber became a dangerously deep one, and she could not feel herself being lifted into the cold night air by his hard and strong arms.

Having gotten what he lusted from an unconscious Lili, the man with cold eyes then drove to an out of the way spot by the porta della cappucina and when no one was in sight he dragged her to the side of the bridge where street lights were dimmest. There he left her and got into his car to drive swiftly away. He tried hard to forget that he had left her there soaked in her own blood and moaning in quiet agony.

On the night of Saturday October 31, the air was clear and every star glided lovingly through the heavenly deep. As Lili lay, now half conscious, under the silent but

knowing sky, an honest young man of 24 happened to be walking along the riverside. This very handsome man was also a musician, and cared for nothing more than his music and living a quiet life outside of Ascoli Piceno. Girls would make themselves sick to be noticed by him, bewitched by the fact that he smiled *semper*, and had the softest brown eyes that flashed deep passions. The first thing he always made sure of was to do the right thing.

He especially wanted to do what was right as he stopped and leaned over the lovely Lili and felt for her pulse. Her arm was white in the dim lights, and he noticed subconsciously that she was beautiful. But knowing that someone had horribly hurt her, made him move quickly and cautiously. She was breathing evenly and deeply, her long hair dark and feathery, her eyebrows black and beautiful. He loved her instantly. The handsome young man with the honest brown eyes opened her wallet and found a piece of id which would put a name to her face. Lili. Bella. He looked close at her last name, Angellini.....he had heard that name so many times, but decided it was of no connection to that other Angellini he had heard so much of.

This tender young musician, who had held so many girls in his arms as easily as if they were flowers, found his heart fluttering as he lifted her with loving care and rested her head on his strong shoulder. Being tall and thin, but well built, he was able to walk quickly but softly. Lili now stirred a little, coming painfully back to consciousness.

“You are not him” she spoke with velvety heavy voice.

“Sshh, *va bene, va bene.*” He whispered softly to her. Lili looked at him dreamily, without really seeing him, and not knowing how her black eyes made him tremble and break inside.

After he carried her into the hospital, and nurses surrounded her, and after the doctors had interviewed him, the young man took one last look upon her and his heart broke. Before he turned to leave, he felt something cool on his hand. Lili was holding her silver star bracelet, now broken, and saying

“amico, amico, avevo desiderato per te.....amico.”

he took the broken bracelet out of her small hand, and simply said,

“Si, tuo amico...semper”

He then kissed the bracelet, and fighting the desire never to leave this girl, he held it tightly as he turned and went back into the night air. He knew there was something different inside of him, and the memory of her large sad eyes, and her silver bracelet, would never leave him.

### Silver Stars and New Friends

It was on a bright and new May morning that Lore went into the studio again at Forli. It was his first time there in six months, and now that Lili was finally coming to a sense of peace with herself, he could again concentrate on his music.

The last six months had been hard for the both of them. They had struggled through shock and tears, and Lili's bitter anger and tormenting depression. At first Lore was in despair for her, but though her first sexual experience had been forced upon her, Lili did not let it destroy her, and Lore watched as she grew calmer and stronger, taking whatever good she could from an awful experience.

Now Lore smiled for the first time in months as he came from the office into the lobby with handfuls of schedules, almost tripping over the steel bass guitar before him. The owner of the bass was quick to apologise and then recognised Lore. Smiling, and very interested in this striking bassist he had never met before Lore asked his name.

“Pasha Laceni”, the smiling young man held out his hand.

“What a cool name. come on lets hear you.”

The afternoon was spent in laying the foundation of a friendship that would last for decades and was ended with the cementing of a musical partnership which both were grateful for.

“Will you be there for the parco novi sad in two weeks?”

“I will Lore, and thanks for this, it’s what I’ve needed a long time now.”

“Any way I can help I will, and in the meantime, you come to my house in Cortona Sunday for supper, and meet my sister, she’s all the family I have, but she’s amazing.”

“Sure I will” Pasha smiled politely as he very carefully placed a violin within its cedar chest.

“Lili is an amazing writer too, you should see some of her stuff, if she lets you.”

Pasha dropped the delicate violin and looked at Lore with startled , wide dark eyes. “What did you say her name is?”

“Oh, Lili, you’ll like her, she’s sweet.”

Lore gave his new friend a pat on the back and lightly walked out the door, leaving Pasha standing paralyzed over a broken violin, but seeing only beautiful dark eyes and silver stars.

.....

Lili liked this new friend of Lore’s. She liked the way he spoke with such a kind softness. She liked his calm demeanour and sweet manners. She also liked his deep brown eyes, which could never seem to meet hers, unless for an irresistible quick glance. Pasha was more kind and open with her than anyone had ever been, and Lili found herself warming to him, shyly but gratefully. At times it seemed there was something hidden deep in his dark but sensitive eyes, when he would fall silent and gaze at her

almost unbelievably. But Lili hardly noticed, just to be near him was fulfilment enough. She began to feel as though she had finally made a genuine friend.

The evening of the concert drew near, and the more time Lili spent in the uplifting company of Pasha, the more she was filled with a new confidence and happiness. Sitting upon the steps of the piazza del' commune under the starry sky, she spoke to him as she had never spoken to anyone. He seldom looked right at her, but when he did, Lili saw something familiar and comforting which drew out all her untold feelings.

“And what of the convent now?” he asked softly.

“I guess, after some things happened, last fall...I decided it wasn't what I needed. Sister Iona was disappointed, and so was I, but I felt different, I wasn't the same anymore...maybe someday I'll tell you about it.” A saddened look came over her, as she tried to forget, at the same time trying to remember the safe arms that had rescued her, the gentle eyes that had promised her friendship forever.

“Such beauty, and so pained.” He smiled sweetly at her. “It makes you a great writer.” Lili looked at the sparkling sky and felt him near her. She faintly heard him sigh, and thought he whispered to himself “...hold you again.” Pasha looked away into the distance of a violet night and softly spoke, “Would you like to have dinner with me Saturday night, after the concert? There's something I need to tell you Lili.”

“Yes, I would like to.” He looked a sweet look of happiness. “Thanks for being my friend Pasha”

“Didn't I already tell you I would be your friend semper?”

Lili's puzzled look melted as he touched her hair shyly and sweetly. After he had walked her home, almost as an after thought, he leaned forward with such grace and kissed her cheek so softly, that it burned wonderfully all that night.

The day of the concert dawned upon the hillside of Cortona with a clear golden warmth that breathed of love. Watching the sun rise over her ancient city, Lili could think of nothing but Pasha. Thinking of him made her tremble inside and smile for no reason. She was smiling when Lore came into her room. To him she seemed as a new creature bathed in the light of love. He held out a small white box to her.

“What is it?”

“It’s from your new friend my sweet.”

“Do you know what it is?” she smiled excitedly.

“Maybe I do...I do know that you are going to like what you see.” Lore kissed her head gently and left her alone.

Lili held the small box in the sunlight, and slowly she opened it, seeing first one small white lily on top of a folded piece of paper. She picked up the note and read,

“Stellina mia, the first moment I saw your face, I was taken back to that night when I found you by the porta cappucina, when I first looked into those beautiful eyes. That face was my fate...and how you suffered. I only wanted to hold you to me and comfort you, as I do now. Lili, you were so light to carry, yet so full of pain-let me make it easier for you-let me make you happy. Let me love you. Never once have I stopped thinking of you since that night, and every day I am thankful that a star fell from heaven for me to stumble upon and love. Now I have found you again, and I will make you mine. Do you remember now my face...or have you ever forgotten it?”

She had not forgotten. Lili thought back to that terrible night and remembered clearly those caring dark eyes, his loving look, and his comforting voice. It was Pasha’s arms that had carried her to safety. Lili was so happy that tears flowed into shaking hands, how badly she wanted to believe it. All the confirmation she needed was lying at the bottom of a small white box. She reached past layers of paper, and there it was, all in one piece, its silver stars shining in gold sun. she had given it to him broken, and he had fixed it, as he had fixed her. Lili put the bracelet on and thanked god for love.

## Beginning Again

A thousand people are screaming with happiness. Friends hold friends for protection. Lore sits upon a stage strumming his chitarra. Lili runs, her heart beating wildly, through the deliberate maze of backstage offices and dressing rooms. It's almost midnight, the concert is over, and she knows he is near. She runs breathless and excited, and there! She sees him coming to her, smiling to get her, Pasha gathers her to him as planets gathering stars, and he holds her tightly.

"Now you will be mine." He kisses her firmly.

"Yours and only yours. Semper."





