

did I agree to do this? It's a terrible, terrible, mistake. And when people laugh during the reading, I always feel like kissing them, every single one.

I smile into the far distance and wrap my right hand around my left thumb and bow low. Then I mouth *thank you* to my Tai Chi teacher and turn to leave.

Ahhhhhhh, the writing life. It's filled with great joy and awful despair and enormous possibilities and repeated rejections. It's easy to focus on the rejections. I receive letters from editors and publishers that dismiss my writing. (I also receive letters that accept my writing, but it's the rejections I pay close attention to.) But listen: I wouldn't trade my life for anything else in this world. Writing is filled with lessons for life.

If he ever asks me, I know what I'll say. "Ken, writing has changed my life. Over and over again."

Candis Graham is obsessed with creative non-fiction these days. This piece is from a manuscript of essays titled, Leaning Into My Spirit: A Writer's Journey, which only a few publishers have rejected so far.

SUSAN SWAN

Today I had a Sapphic Moment

Today I had a Sapphic moment,
on the terrace in Molivos.
I was watering my geraniums
the sun slamming my head
like a golden fiend.
O friend, this gardener was suffering!
but the running hose wet my feet
and soon I gave in and watered myself
until my skin was drenched and shining
like the earth under my feet
from where my azaleas sprung.
And like them,
I, too, was growing in the garden—
a long, oddish plant,
tall for a woman
but not so big, after all.
The lemon tree on my terrace
is twice as tall
and leafier too
with many more arms than I can stretch up
in thanks
to the opalescent skies of Greece.

—*Eagles' Nest, Molivos, July 1998*

Fiction by Susan Swan has been published in ten countries. Her last novel, The Wives of Bath, has been made into a film that will be released later this year.

MARIANNE MATTE

Cinco de Mayo

Sous mes yeux s'évapore la pointe de l'aube
Je suis un livre ouvert
Une conteuse des Mille et une nuits
Un à un je défais mes lourds boulets
J'écoute mes sources intérieures, le chant de
mon ruisseau
Je suis un jardin merveilleux
Semé de tant de graines de mille d'origines
Je suis une rive sauvage
Prête à éclore à la caresse du soleil, à la rosée
du matin
Je dispose ma bouche au sourire du rayon
Les oiseaux m'adorent, et comme eux
Je ne me préoccupe guère de demain
Par ce soir rose d'été
J'adapte cette prose sous la volée
d'hirondelles rêveuses
Je suis un matin délicat qui gravite aussi
gaiement
Que la fraîcheur de l'enfant
L'heure de ma moisson délicieuse est venue
J'adore la seconde de l'envol
Les découvertes d'immenses petites choses
Aussi diverses que les grains de sable
Je suis une larme de joie
Une herbe rousse au creux de l'arbre
Depuis l'avortement digne de ma mort
Dans mes yeux de mai j'ai semé
Des particules d'amour infini
Et l'éclosion de mon âme odorante
Embaume tout ce qui m'entoure
Et comme un rayon d'aurore boréale

Marianne Matte is from Lac St-Jean.