1-30-2013

The Ever Elusive Red Daffodil

Kurt Meyer

Grand Valley State University

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/amaranthus

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/amaranthus/vol1989/iss1/3

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Amaranthus by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.
Christine stood in the school parking lot, the warm spring breeze whipping and twisting her long blonde lockes. She was the tallest of the small group and most of the males if asked would've described her in one word as “statuesque”—that is, as statuesque as a third grader can be.

Our class was meeting with the other third grade classes for the annual daffodil harvest in VanLeirop’s woods which sat across the parking lot from the school.

Tommy Ames was on the other side of the group slightly aloof and wearing a baseball cap. He was lucky enough to be Christine’s boyfriend for the past two weeks but his mother made him get his hair cut — and as everyone knows Christine doesn’t like short hair.

As a result, every boy in the class was at least dreaming of the great honor of being the “chosen one.” She never went more than a day or two without a boyfriend. Luckily for me the car payment and mortage fell due on the same day that month and my parents had let me grow my hair longer than usual.

The group made its way across the parking lot and Christine weaved gracefully through the crowd until she was at my side. She reached her soft white hand over and ran her fingers through my hair.

“You have wonderful hair,” she said as she looked lovingly at my long curls.

“Thank you,” I replied. But as I started to add a compliment of my own she interjected.

“You know Tommy and I split and I’ve always thought you were kinda cute so I thought maybe we could hook up.”

My life flashed before my eyes. I dreamed of being seen everywhere with her and how jealous everyone would be as we stood holding hands by the “Clifford the Big Red Dog” poster in the library. Of all the guys in our class she had chosen me. I thought of our future lives together—a long courtship and then after graduation we would be married.

Somewhere between the white picket fence and our fourth child my thoughts were interrupted by Christine’s parameters for our prenuptial agreement.

“And all you have to do is find a red daffodil for me.”

Without thinking I told her that I would find one for her, crossing the deepest ocean if it came to that.

As we reached the edge of the woods the feeling of a slow painful death engulfed my aspirations. I wished it would be as easy as crossing an ocean I thought. The red daffodil is the most elusive, rare flower in the world and if by chance there was one in Valeirop’s woods it had surely been picked by on of the groups that had gone earlier in the day.

“Remember now, the younger kids haven’t been out yet so don’t pick too many and be careful not to step on any.” Mrs. Theil said as the group dispersed.

I left the love of my life with a wink and a wave and went to the most secluded part of the woods with anxious but fleeting hopes of finding the rare flower. Looking back I saw Christine picking up yellow daffodils by the handful and throwing them over her shoulder, then stomping them. I broke through the heavy foliage making my way to the edge of the woods near the mansion that, as rumor had it, Al Capone once owned. Most of the other kids were scared of this place so I knew that if there was a red daffodil anywhere in the woods this would...
be the place to find it.

It was tough going for a while but I found a large stick which I used as a machete, like the guy on the "Rat Patrol." My arm became heavy as the mansion neared and the vines grew thicker.

With what I knew would be the last swipe with the large stick I cleared a web-like growth from my path and found myself face to face with a large grey gravestone. Realizing myself to be standing directly upon the remains of someones dearly departed I let out a shriek and jumped clear of any hands that might reach through the moist soil and drag me under.

I landed on my stomach a few feet away, panting heavily with my hands over my eyes. After a few minutes I gathered enough courage to split the fingers on my right hand and look carefully upon the stone.

**EMILY**
**BORN?**
**DIED 1927**

I removed both hands from my face and studied the message for a moment. "What had she died from?" I wondered. My mind raced with images of Al Capone strangling his mistress some fifty years earlier when he owned these grounds. No, if that were the case he wouldn’t have buried her near his house and given her a tombstone. He would have given her a pair of cement shoes and tossed her in the nearby river.

My thoughts were cut short by a shadowed outline to the right of the stone.

"THE RED DAFFODIL!" I screamed as I dauntlessly passed over the grave and took the flower.

"Love is mine, my life has meaning," I thought as I headed back to claim my prize.

The trip back was much quicker because of the ready-made path and the bounce of youthful love in my step. As I neared the established gathering place for our group I was sidetracked by a whispering scream from my right.

"psssst, Kurt."

Walking over I found Willie Oldham and Tommy Ames crouched around and old bathtub someone had thrown out years before.

"Looky here what we found, Willie and me..." Tommy said with devious enthusiasm. "...Dirty books."

Carefully placing the token of my love on the soap dish I sat next to Willie and looked on as he slowly—thoughtfully turned the pages. My mouth gaped as I saw things I had never seen before and told Willie to turn back a few times. I wondered silently if my Christine would look like this someday and if she wouldn’t mind having a fifth and sixth child. After a few minutes we decided to head back before they started looking for us. Willie, not quite satisfied, folded the magazine and stuffed it in his pants.

Turning around I saw that Tommy had left, and with him my flower.

"That son of a bitch!"

I jumped up and ran as quickly as I could, only to find Christine smelling the fruits of my labor as she rubbed Tommy’s burr like head.

An ocean of tears swelled in my eyes as I knew I would be alone for the rest of my life.

*Kurt Meyer*