

Night Whispers  
by  
Matthew J. Pallamary

Her beautiful white flowers called to me like silken bells. I couldn't resist the thrill she promised, so I went to her. Carlos said she could give me the gift of flight – and flying is what I wanted. Away from myself. Away from the hell that was my life.

I took the whole plant, chopping leaves, seeds, flowers, stems, and roots into a mixture that I boiled, wondering just how it would taste.

Once it cooled, I found out.

I climbed into bed to wait for her and in a short time She came for me; a strong, sudden breeze that swept up everything in its path until I too was whisked away, taking flight, letting her carry me on her wings. .

.

. . . Until I awoke with a jolt, heart hammering, adrenaline pumping.

What the hell was that?

Sitting up, I took a deep breath.

*Down in the cellar.*

I swung my feet over the edge of the bed and stood, torn between the desire to investigate and the urge to run until I felt it coming toward me again like a cat stalking a sparrow. I shivered, waiting for it to pounce, but it only whispered in many voices, barely audible at first, then rising in volume, until they boomed through me.

Laughing, sighing, wailing -- with a familiarity that hung just beyond the reach of my awareness. Calling. *Drawing me* down to the cellar. I left the bedroom, heading for the kitchen at the end of the hall until I stopped at the top of the cellar stairs where they beckoned with greater urgency.

A faint blue light shimmered beneath the door, throbbing with the heartbeat that pounded in my ears. Nostalgia enveloped me and the voices rushed through my mind again like the wind passing over reeds in a pond, rattling them in its wake. Mom, Dad, Grandma, Joey.

Fear and exhilaration overwhelmed me. Stumbling across the kitchen, I lunged toward the door until my hand found the knob, then I froze, unable to take another step.

Something rose up deep within me, confronting the obsession of the voices, canceling them out until they returned -- stronger. The power inside me rallied, and the voices came again, repeating the exchange over and over, each force confronting the other with increasing rapidity, until my mind raced aimlessly.

I turned the knob and pushed.

The dank smell of mildew assaulted me, then the door swung noiselessly on its hinges as though pulled by an unseen force.

They were all there, glowing; translucent, yet solid. Gesturing for me to join them. Their mouths moved as they spoke, but no words came. The cold trickle down the small of my back and the prickling sensation that danced across my scalp were the last physical sensations I remembered.

Like stepping off a cliff, I plummeted into a dark abyss. My hands flew out, desperate for something solid, but I only twisted, tumbled, and screamed as the darkness claimed me for its own.

I opened my eyes back in my bedroom. The feeble light of the approaching day filtered in through the curtains, making my disheveled bed barely visible in the gray, predawn shadows. Leaning over it, I gazed into my eyes, wide in lifeless terror, and my mouth -- gaping in its own silent scream.

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\*\*\*ABOUT AURTHER

Matthew J. Pallamary's work has appeared in *Oui*, *New Dimensions*, *The Iconoclast*, *Starbright*, *Infinity*, *Passport*, *The Short Story Digest*, *Redcat*, *The San Diego Writer's Monthly*, *Connotations*, *Phantasm*, *Essentially You*, *The Haven Journal*, and many others. His fiction has been featured in *The San Diego Union Tribune* which he has also reviewed books for, and his work has been heard on KPBS-FM in San Diego, KUCI FM in Irvine, television Channel Three in Santa Barbara, and *The Susan Cameron Block Show* in Vancouver.

He has been a guest on the following nationally syndicated talk shows; *Paul Rodriguez*, *In The Light* with Michelle Whitedove, and *Environmental Directions Radio* series. Mr. Pallamary has also appeared on the following nationally syndicated television shows speaking about fading cultures; *Bridging Heaven and Earth*, *Elyssa's Raw and Wild Food Show*, and *ECONews*, a half hour television show that went out to over 30 million homes via PBS satellite.

His first book *The Small Dark Room Of The Soul* is in its second printing and has been e-published with Alexandria Digital Literature. It has also been mentioned in *The Year's Best Horror And Fantasy*. His second short story collection, *A Short Walk To The Other Side*, has been published as an electronic book, by Mystic-Ink, an imprint of the Digital Literature Institute. *Dreamland*, a novel about computer generated dreaming, written with Ken Reeth has also been published as an e-book by Mystic-Ink and has been short-listed for the Second Annual

Independent e-Book Awards in the Horror/Thriller category.

Mr. Pallamary has taught a fiction workshop at the Santa Barbara Writers' Conference for the past thirteen years, has lectured at the Getting It Write Conference in Oregon, the Southern California Writers' Conference in San Diego, the Saddleback Writers' Conference, the Rio Grande Writers' Seminar, the National Council of Teachers of English, The San Diego Writer's and Editor's Guild, The San Diego Book Publicists and he has been a panelist at the World Fantasy Convention, Con-Dor, and Coppercon. He was also Chief of Staff for the Mystic-Ink Writers' Conference and will be lecturing at the Southern California Writer's Conference in Los Angeles.

His historical novel of first contact between shamans and Jesuits in 18th century South America, titled, *Land Without Evil*, has been published in hardcover by Charles Publishing, and has received rave reviews along with a San Diego Book Award for mainstream fiction. It is also recommended reading in over a dozen high school and college English departments throughout the United States and was chosen as a Reading Group Choices selection. Mr. Pallamary has been picked as Man of the Year 2000 for San Diego Writer's Monthly Magazine. He frequently visits the jungles of Yucatan, Chiapas, and the Peruvian Amazon pursuing his studies of shamanism.

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