

Some Words on Tom Deitz

"Tom Deitz...I'd been reading fairy tales since I knew how to read, and he was hardly the first fantasy author I found who wrote about elves...but he was the first one (and remains one of the few) who really captured for me the magic of Faerie. Every time I pick up a Changeling book, I think of his work. And more importantly, he captured the spirit of Appalachia. It was clear he was in love with these hills. Every word he wrote shone with the magic I see in them. I can't say I'd be surprised if wandering around the mountains long enough brought me to Tir na Nog."

-- Julia

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I am thankful to you for keeping those of us on the outskirts updated throughout Tom's last journey. He was tremendously admired as one of the most elegant men I've ever met, and I had written that to him since he became so ill. . . He once called my "Funky Chicken Art Project", the "Sistine Hen House". His gallant presence, humor, and wit will be missed terribly.

--Christina White (Thorkatla)

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I'm sure the Rev. Robert Kirk was there to welcome him when he landed his boat. Tom always said there were a couple of things he wanted to ask him about his The Secret Commonwealth.

As o rare Ben Jonson wrote in his "The Jackman's Song":

The Fairy beame upon you,
The Starres to glisten on you;
A Moon of light
In the Noone of night,
till the fire-drake hath o'er-gone you.
The Wheele of fortune guide you,
The Boy with the Bow beside you,
Runne aye in the Way,
Till the Bird of day,
and the luckyer lot betide you."

--James Pratt

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He will be missed. His touch will linger on through the lives he has touched. His

impact will be felt throughout time as each person touches another because he was here.

The impact of the bard never stops. It may appear to diminish just as light difuses through space as it travels, yet a star from millions of years away can still be seen, so his life will still shine.

The contributions are many, the lives impacted also many, and because of his presence the known world was changed.

May those that are left be better able to deal with the trials that come because he was here.

Peace to all.

--Gwyn ap Gwyn
Kestrel of Wales

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I hate that no other eleven year old girl will ever get to find a brand-new book written by him and fall in love with it. I still can't believe that I didn't connect Tom Dietz, author of my favorite books ever, with Master Dylan for something like five or six years after I found those books.

--Morgan/Gwen

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My name is Sheri McLaughlin, I am Uncle Tom's step niece (Wilda's step daughter). Mom called with the news about Uncle Tom this morning.

I have been feeling pressed for days to share some of my earliest memories of Uncle Tom with all of you in Georgia that knew him so much better then I did. It was in the middle 80's that I somewhat lost touch with Uncle Tom, but would ask mom about how he was rather then contact him myself, what a mistake I feel, but that is what happened.

The earliest of memories I can pull up is when I was 6 or 7 years old and as a family we traveled to Georgia to visit Nannie and Paw Paw along with whatever other family we could. Uncle Tom at Nannie and Paw Paw house had the most amazing comic book collection. I am not sure what has happen to that collection, but there were hundreds of comic books. I was allowed to go in and look at them but had to put them back right where they came from. I thought it was all just so amazing!

When I grew older about 4th grade we lived in Morgan Hill California and Uncle Tom came for a visit. It must had been summer or maybe spring break cause Tonya and I were not in school.

Uncle Tom was painting a mural of Cortez and the 7 cities of gold on our living room wall, it was incredible to watch the picture come to life. One day my sister and I got this brilliant idea (cause children really do only have ideas and NO reason) that we would go out to the garage and play in the car. We lived on a hill and it was straight down to a lake and the car started moving, while Tonya and I were trying to stop this moving car it was edging ever closer to a straight shot into the lake way down at the bottom of the hill. Looking back as a child it probably all seemed longer and bigger then things were really. Our fingers were stuck between the car doors and springs of the garage and Uncle Tom came to the rescue, he was very upset and Mom and Dad tells us that as they were coming back from lunch in the parking lot, one of them commented isn't that our car going down the high way, well no sooner did mom get upstairs uncle Tom was calling Mom at work and telling her he had us at the emergency room. This story just tickles us all and Mom and Dad could probably add a lot more to it then me.

As I grew into my pre-teen, younger teen years, Uncle Tom and I had this thing for John Denver, he looked just like John Denver, closing my eyes right now, I smile and can see Uncle Tom with his round glasses and short bowl hair cut just like John Denver's. I was so proud that my uncle was a John Denver look a like, every year he sent me a John Denver album. It was fun to have that between him and I. I did not get to see him in his later years , but for me I will always remember Uncle Tom with a song of Rocky Mountain High and Country Roads in my heart and smile cause that was special between us.

Thank you for letting me share, blessings to you all , Sheri McLaughlin

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When we used to have impromptu sing-a-longs at Wesley, Tom always requested Bob Dylan's "Hard Rain's a Gonna Fall." I can still hear him chiming in on the chorus!

--Melissa (and Bob) Vickers

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He and I have many connections: He and my wife ran in the high school circle that included Van Burns; I ran in his circle to some extent at YHC as did my brother. He worked with my father in law at Clifton Precision. He drove my in laws down to Carrollton for my wife's graduation. An on.

--Ernie Seckinger

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I first met Tom Deitz when I was a student of Brad Strickland's in eighth grade, back in 1984. Brad was my Composition teacher at Lakeview Academy back then, and told us one day that his friend Tom Deitz, who had just written a new book called "Windmaster's Bane", would be coming to talk with us about writing. Tom spoke to a class of mostly disinterested eighth-graders and soon had every one of us enthralled.

Because that was his gift, you know. He could enthrall *anyone* with his wordweaving

skills.

I was starry-eyed when I spoke with Tom afterwards -- after all, other than Brad himself, I had never met any other Real Live Authors before -- and he was most gracious and friendly. I found out over the years that that was just the way he was, too -- gracious and friendly to everyone he met. He looked nonplused when I told him I wanted his autograph, but that I hadn't yet read his book. I assured him that I was GOING to read it just as soon as I could, but that it was really neat for me to meet another Real Live Author. He laughed and said he wasn't sure he counted as that, but that he'd be happy to write me a little note and sign it. Which he did.

I still have that note today, folded into my copy of his first David Sullivan book, "Windmaster's Bane" -- which I did indeed read shortly thereafter. I was just enchanted by its lyrical language, the characters, and the engrossing story of a boy and his friends drawn into a world beyond their imaginings. I read each new book in the series with delight, and soon branched out into Tom's other work. I would see him occasionally at conventions here and there, and always he remembered me with a smile. I always told him how much I'd enjoyed his stories over the years and how much I looked forward to reading more. And he would smile broadly, and say how happy he was to hear that.

I saw Tom at ChattaCon several years ago. I was in the Atlanta Radio Theatre Company by then, and we were performing a few pieces that year. Tom was doing a reading from the newly revised and updated edition of "Windmaster's Bane", and I sat there, listening to his voice, just as enthralled as I'd been when discovering the story for the first time. When he finished, I told him I thought it was a neat idea and that I'd be sure to pick up the revised version as soon as it was available. We talked for a while longer and then I took my leave of him. That was the last time I ever saw him.

I moved to Austin , Texas in October of last year, and I heard about Tom's swift decline through my friends in ARTC over the past few weeks. It was with enormous sadness that I heard of his passing, and with even more sadness that I realized there was no way I could be here for the service, being so far away. So I sent this on to Gil, and I hope he can find the time to read this for Tom's friends and family, so that they can know how very much I loved Tom's work, and how wonderful a person he really was.

Except that they know that last already. Because everyone who met Tom, even for just a couple of minutes, knew that he was a really unique and special guy.

Thanks for the magic and mystery you brought into my world with your stories, Tom. I'll miss you a great deal. The world of Faerie, no doubt, is holding its own solemn celebration of your life today.

--Phil Carter

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Thanks again for letting me contribute to the celebration for Tom. I thought the afternoon was a fitting mixture of laughs, sobs, music, and laughs. Tom would spontaneously pop into my office to share a coffee (we shared a love of the high octane variety) and shoot the bull, and I just keep expecting him to walk through my door. The spirit of the man is still with us.

--Jeff

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I didn't know Tom Dietz through the SCA, though his books pointed me in the direction of it and I enjoyed it for a long time. I did meet him at a few SF cons, and loved his books. I appreciate the news you've posted about him, even though it was sad. Glad it wasn't something I found out about years later.

I would like to send my condolences to his family, both blood and friends. I had a close friend, who I'd lost touch with several years back. One of the things we had in common was a love for Tom's novels. I forwarded your first post about his illness to her, and we began emailing again. After four years of silence, we're talking again. Just one final gift from him.

Thanks for all you've done to keep everyone informed, and my sympathies on the loss of your friend.

--Marie Harrell

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During the last few months, Gil has kept me informed on all the ups and downs of Tom courageous fight for his life and although Tom probably would not have considered me a friend, I did work with him while he was in the Ga Room at UGA Library and we all celebrated with him in the publication of his 1st book and were glad he eventually moved on to follow his writing dream. In all the events of the last months, I was especially thankful and amazed at all of you who put so much effort and concern into making sure Tom had the best care possible and stood by him when he needed your help, time after time.

There are times like these when you find out if you have any friends and I think Tom would agree that he had some exceptional ones and I just wanted to personally thank all of you for your many efforts in his behalf.

--Linda Aaron , Hargrett Library, UGA Libraries

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Goodbye, friend.
Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.

Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.

- Inscription from ancient Celtic stones

--Dee McKinney

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We were all at Rallie's cabin on Wateree Lake in SC one time. One of the winter trips. We were in the big room, a fire going. Tom and three other people were playing cards. Susan Carrier and I were smoking small cigars, flipping through a COSMO magazine, making fun of it and being silly college girls. Other people were scattered around the room. One of us looking at the magazine says, "What's an orgasm (rhetorically of course, lol!). Tom, doesn't miss a beat at his card game says, "It's like a sneeze. Only lower."

Tom and I talked of mountains things, writing, writers but we were not SCA, science fiction, to Toli buddies. I remember laughing a lot with him, or mostly him laughing at me and an incredible sense of humility he had.

--Sharon Thomason

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Alan & I became friends with Tom in the early '70's when we all spent just about every day at the Wesley Foundation at the University of Georgia, and every Wed. night at the Science Fiction Club meetings. I never went to London with Tom, as so many of his later friends did, but I spent many a Sun. afternoon driving around the area with Tom & friends, even when the gas crisis struck & there were almost no gas stations open on Sun.s! And oh, those weekends at Rallie's cabin on the lake!!

Our Wesley crowd worshiped together on Sun. mornings, singing & laughing . . . then there were those fun Sun. night suppers. After the Wed. night SciFi meetings, we would always go to the same pizza joint, where those who were so inclined drew on the napkins - I was so pleased to see some of that "napkin art" at Tom's Life Celebration!!

When our first daughter, Jennifer, was born in 1984, we asked Tom to be her godfather, and another Wesley friend, Sharon, to be her godmother. Tom asked, "Does this mean we have to get married?!!". Although Tom never married any of us, we in the Wesley & SciFi groups have remained close in thought & memories, if not always in distance. Those early ties are binding, and we helped shape each other into the people we are today. Goodness, wasn't there alot of love in those groups!

We will miss Tom
With love from Susan Carrier & Alan Hanna

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Fans of *Fireshaper's Doom* may remember Jim Dunning's pipes and *Blackwater*, that our friend Tom so graciously immortalized on cassette in David Sullivan's car. Yes, that was me, and *Blackwater* was the band for Irish and International music (no paramilitary organization) of the early 1980's, which I founded in 1979.

Meantime I went away and came back. I went Gaelic and so now I am *Séamus* (the Mad Piper) onstage with *The Ballybeg Band* (You can see our photo on Myspace music), but I can never forget the shot in the arm Tom tried to give our career in ca. 1981, by giving us a cameo appearance in his heroic fiction. Tom used to show up at many of my performances with *Blackwater* and afterward (solo or duet) on St. Patrick's Day, yearly at *The Globe* in Athens .

We formed *The Ballybeg Band* just before Tom got sick, so I understand why I never saw him in attendance with the new band. I will miss Tom as a genuine friend and fan of my music over the years. He will get a lament on the pipes.

On 3 May I had a commitment I could not escape, and could not attend the ceremony in North Georgia . So I must pass along my reminiscences, remarks and condolences to Tom's friends and relations not in person, but sadly after the fact. In order to write such superb fantasy, Tom had a rich inner life that not everyone can visualize, and now Tom's circle is complete. Tom is resting in Niggle's Parish and maybe even now gearing up for his next Great Adventure on its expanding Frontiers.

--James (Séamus) Dunning (the Mad Piper)

(Apologies to J.R.R.T., *Leaf by Niggle*)