

PLATEAU

October/November 2021

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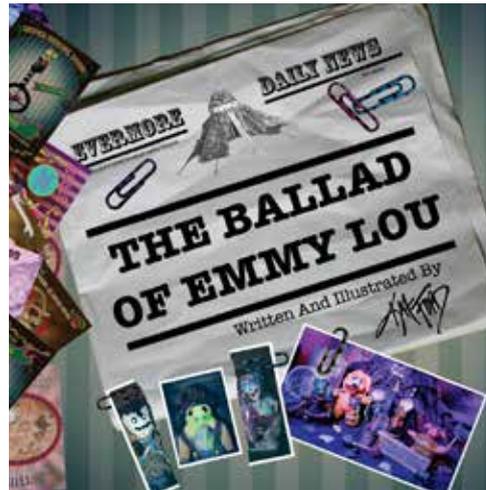


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from the editor



Character Arc

For my letter this issue, I embraced Halloween and thought I'd share a short story, "The Ballad of Emmy Lou." Self-published in 2014, it was my ode to Edgar Allen Poe, Jack Prelutsky, Tim Burton and Appalachian murder ballads. Songs like "Long Black Veil" and "Knoxville Girl" paint dark pictures of the human condition, but in my heart of hearts, I am forever a unicorn-loving optimist. So, I needed my spooky story sprinkled with whimsy and redemption. I illustrated the book by building the town of Evermore in my kitchen- made of clay, cardboard and fabric. My "monsters and circus freaks" were more adorable than frightening- a visual reminder that words aren't always properly assigned. Relying on photographic illustrations for added storytelling, the last scene shows Farmer Bram writing an apology letter and returning to town with a parade of banners saying, "we missed you" and "we are glad you aren't mean anymore!"

In October, we acknowledge the change from abundant fairytale to barren forest with all things spooky. While nature sets a stage for us to look inward and think about the darker parts of the human condition, let us also us remember compassion, empathy, the healing power of forgiveness and the character arc created in redemption. In short, remember Emmy Lou:

Evermore was on Wolf Hair Creek,
full of washed-up monsters and circus freaks.
Among them lived the most unique
and beautiful Emmy Lou.

Evermore had an old salon.
It served mummies, ghosts and werewolves too.
There were musical performances at half past noon,
sung by Emmy Lou.

With her rainbow hair, bright blue eyes
and a smile that could even shock Frankenstein,
I guess it should come as no surprise
that everybody loved Emmy Lou.

Emmy Lou loved Edgar Joe.
They lived at One Bat Hill with their pet crow.
Farmer Bram had a jealous soul-
because he wanted Emmy Lou.

One dark night on Wolf Hair Creek,
Bram took Edgar past where he could see.
The townsfolk say he did an evil deed,
so he could have Emmy Lou.

The verdict came when the sun was low.
Farmer Bram reaped what he sowed.
Bitterness was growing, though,
in the heart of Emmy Lou.

Edgar Joe feared the fate
of a woman's heart that was full of hate.
He whispered, "Darlin', please don't wait
to forgive him, Emmy Lou."

There are consequences for your deeds,
but forgiveness always sets you free.
Think twice about your actions, please,
and remember Emmy Lou.

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us your feedback or story ideas by emailing
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