The Secret

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Recommended Citation
Available at: http://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol18/iss1/17
Bull Market

“Yeah. A jungle. That’s what I wanted to be — a jungle explorer. Gimme a pith helmet, a machete, and an undiscovered country.”

She looked up. “Well, there are days when the machete would be useful,” she said. “What jungle do you explore?”

“I’m between expeditions right now,” I said, puffing up with unwarranted confidence. “But you’re right. It’s all one big wicked jungle. Eat or be eaten.” I took a long sip of my coffee, watching her over the brim of my cup. The cup was empty, but she didn’t know that. Attitude is everything. I gave her my best French roast look — savoring the rich, fictitious liquid. Wary eyes watched.

She glanced at her watch, smiled politely and folded up the paper. I noticed blue ball-point scribbling in the margins.

“Nice doodles,” I said.

“Thanks,” she said. Flat and dry, but a tinge of amusement. She stashed the paper in a blue valise and pulled out a copy of Barron’s.

“Bear tracks?” I asked.

“More like the running of the bulls,” she muttered. The blue eyes looked up and smiled over the top of the magazine.

I swirled my imaginary brew, hoisted it to my lips and smiled into the empty cup.

—Ron Edison

THE SECRET

Autumn’s Trees
With burnished leaves
Saluting to the Sun.

Fermented Breeze
With fragrant ease
Whispers what’s to come.

— Cindy DeFranco