



## Wizards, Woods and Gods

*F.T. McKinstry*

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The Otherworld takes shape in this collection of twelve stories told on a rich, fairytale tapestry of swords, sorcery, romance, dreams, visions and verse. Ancient gardens, lost temples, cosmic alignments, immortal predators, assassins, shapeshifters, warriors and maidens will transport you to realms where the rules are different, nothing is as it seems and the heart keeps the balance of ages.

Some of these stories inspired my novels; others were inspired by them; and some take place in the same worlds. Many of these stories have been published in fantasy/scifi magazines.

Click on the following stories for illustrations and excerpts.

**Earth Blood** - The earth keeps secrets. A warrior discovers ancient power in his veins when he's plunged into the political corruption of a war devised to hide the truth of his mother's death.

**The Om Tree** - Trees know things. A tree planted by a god at the dawn of a forest and raised in close proximity to an energy well beneath a wizards' citadel knows a great many things. In this story, a wizard-assassin loses what is most dear to him and thereby learns the true nature of his art.

**Pattern Sense** - It all started with a mouse. A knitter discovers the strengths and pitfalls of an ancient power through the love of a warrior.

**The War God Sleeps** - When a lush, fertile land is seized by drought, a lonely hermit's son ventures deep into the hills in search of water and there awakes a beautiful, yet terrible god whom the world has learned to live without.

**The Fifth Verse** - An ancient immortal entity defies the rules of her kind by falling in love with a mortal warrior, an indiscretion that leaves her grieving, pregnant and dependent on the help of a wizard whose army was responsible for the death of her beloved.

**Deathseer** - Under the influence of a mysterious observatory, the commander of a fearsome army is trapped in a conflict that eventually costs him his honor and the life of his brother, and drives him to accept an inborn magical ability that changes his destiny.

**The Trouble with Tansy** - An orphaned girl on the threshold of womanhood inherits a splendid, mysterious garden from three generations of wisewomen. When a roguish wizard attempts to impress her by disrupting the seasons, she must turn to the old powers for help.

**Marked** - The mother of a fey child learns the pitfalls of mingling with immortals when her boy is taken by a ferocious winged monster at the request of the god who fathered him.

**Eating Crow** - A masterful, wayward shapeshiftress angers a wizard who curses her by summoning a diabolical immortal hunter that puts her near death and forces her to seek the wizard's cat, a gentle, mystical creature that alone can heal her wounds.

**The Bridge** - A visionary who spent her life preparing for a planetary alignment that will materialize a beautiful nature spirit only she can perceive, descends into her blackest fears when she is abandoned to a war for which she is indirectly responsible.

**The Origin** - A woodsman discovers that he is a god who created everything around him to know the love of a woman whose mortality drives him to the brink of annihilation.

**Water Dark** - In the calm deep waters of the mind, the wolf waits. This novella is a tale of desire and deception told on a fairy-tale landscape of arcane texts, herbal lore, visions and disasters at the hands of the powerful.

## **Wizards, Woods and Gods Details**

Date : Published January 27th 2017 (first published February 28th 2012)

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## From Reader Review Wizards, Woods and Gods for online ebook

### Michael Smith says

Eight stories from the author of the *Chronicles of Ealiron* fantasy series explore a common theme of spiritual and psychological awakening. The backdrop of fantasy settings, magic and wizardry form metaphors for how people make deep connections and accept life-altering realizations, often through great pain and confusion. Main characters, initially unaware of their larger purpose in the world, hunt for this integration, but often they begin as if seeking rules or procedures, something like wizard software algorithms, to unlock mystical secrets. Then via calamity or strife they discover that love and psychic wholeness are the real goal they've unconsciously sought all along.

Together these literate and well-paced stories, interleaving visceral sensations and abstract concepts, begin to build a world that will find further development and deeper expression in the author's *Chronicles of Ealiron* novels. *Wizards, Woods, and Gods* stands alone as an cohesive accomplishment but also as a fascinating introduction into the types of characters and themes the author will explore in subsequent longer works.

review by Michael D. Smith

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### Judy & Marianne from Long and Short Reviews says

Originally posted at: <http://lasrssf.blogspot.com/2012/08/w...>

Let's take a walk in the woods. When you come back out, you won't be the same person you were when you went in.

This book contains eight short stories about the wild side, a world full of magical and mythical beings, and the odd creatures that live in the dark shady places. All the stories are interesting and fun to read. This author gives his stories depth and gave this reader the feeling I was actually in that time and place. I had two that really appealed to me.

The Trouble with Tansy is the first. If you've ever grown a garden in the northwest, you have to watch for tansy. It will take over your garden space and is impossible to kill easily. You have to dig it out. This tale is about a young witch caring for her garden and a wizard's apprentice who wants her. He starts by taking half a rose bush, then plants tansy in her garden plot, and then he changes the weather to kill ALL her plants. She goes to visit the Old One to get help. The girl just wants to be left alone. The Wizard's apprentice is a bit full of himself and determined to get what he wants. The ending is quite ironic.

My other favorite is Eating Crow. It's about a shapeshifter and has lots of action and an interesting ending.

I like reading short tales. A writer must be more precise and able to express himself in few words if he wants to get his point across. All these stories were well-done. I also enjoy the bit of fantasy.

Shapeshifters, gods, witches and more live in these pages. Are you brave enough to wander through the woods with them?

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### **Marilyn Stanley says**

This book is somewhat different than I am used to reading but I thoroughly enjoyed it, none the less. a collection of eight short stories that run the gamut from humour, fantasy all the way to science fiction. I found it a very easy read and would highly recommend it!!

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### **Michael Dally says**

Won this book through a goodreads giveaway.

I'm going to start off by saying this wasn't really my type of book. That being said, the series of short stories that make up this book are filled with poetic imaging and storytelling that breathes more than just life into the stories that elevated the telling into the fantasy realm even without subject matter that also took place there. Normally I stick to more action based books, but even without a whole lot of action taking place in these pages, the author still pulls you in with the beautiful writing. Recommended for those that enjoy more poetry and beauty in the writing of the stories they read.

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### **Jessica says**

This is one crafty, creative lady. Her command of the English language, her knowledge of mythology and folklore and story telling abilities are almost intimidating. I enjoyed reading one of these before bed every night. I found them comforting. I've got to point out that she is a complete artist and her blog is worth a visit [ftmckinstry.com](http://ftmckinstry.com).

There is a lot of mystical, ancient atmosphere going on and her use of language reflects that. She writes as though she is from a different time. This is not something that anyone can do. It's a special skill for a contemporary writer to be able to channel a long lost way of speaking. To bring to life characters who literally are from completely different worlds is also a challenge. It requires a certain level of education and creativity. It is a sign of the respect and reverence she has for her chosen genre, era and characters.

The stories are short but complex. Throughout most of them, there is a reverence for nature, water and all things maternal. Warriors, lovers and the cruelty of nature and humanity are also given their due. Wizards and shape shifters do battle. A beautiful shade falls desperately in love with a warrior.

I think my favorite story was Eating Crow, involving a shapeshifting female who rarely takes the form of a mortal woman. Then there is The Bridge, which was a rather sensual tale between a priestess and a hunter. In another tale entitled The Deathseer, there is such a memorable quote by an assassin of all people.

'Love is the difficult choice. Thorn said quietly. Fear is easy.' (The Deathseer in Wizards Woods and Gods by F.T. McKinstry)

Couldn't we all learn from those words?

