POETRY FOR THE DEAD

A Trask Brothers Murder Mystery

By

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Cover by Dusan Arsenic

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Poetry For The Dead is the eleventh installment of the Trask Brothers Murder Mystery Series. I hope you enjoy it. If you wish to see the other books in the series and get announcements of new releases and deals you can visit my website at [www.cenelsonbooks.com](http://www.cenelsonbooks.com).

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Poetry For The Dead

# Chapter 1

The last of the south wind pushed across the lake, a dying gasp, just enough to ruffle the surface. June had produced a beautiful day, and the sun, still two hours above the horizon, promised more to come.

The Quiet Man tied his sixteen-foot, aluminum fishing boat to the dock then took one last look at the lake. Still plenty of time to fish, the best part of the day really, when the water calmed and the sun searched for the horizon. The fish would get more active, eager to bite, and with the clear water in the lake, you could often see them before you cast. But the Quiet Man was done for the day. He went to get his truck.

*Tick tock. Tick tock.*

The Quiet Man kept his eyes focused on the ground as he walked, studying the cracks in the pavement and dried weeds pulled from boats earlier in the day like they were of great interest. He only glanced up twice during his walk. He knew the way.

His neck was bent from years of poor posture at a government desk job that he hated, so he tended to look down as he walked. His concentration on the placement of each step was something more this evening, like he was on a late winter walk, wary of the new ice from the prior day’s thaw. But there was no ice today. The Quiet Man was upset.

He was fully aware of his anger. It was one of the signals he had identified with his therapist. When he was angry, he looked down, focused on his anger, and let it build inside of him to its full potential. When he reached the boiling point, the Quiet Man would look up, but his vision would be blurred. His mind would lock him in a tunnel of darkness, letting the hatred swirl through his brain. The blurred vision was another signal he had identified, and not a good one. At this point, it was difficult to become distracted from his need to hate and do something about it.

His truck seemed to materialize out of nothing. The Quiet Man was unsure how he had arrived, looking back toward the dock, relieved to see his boat still there. He must have tied it. He didn’t remember. The loss of short-term memory was another sign of his anger dominating his thoughts and actions. That one had been written down and talked about, too. It could possibly be dangerous, expensive, and could lead to more anger. Driving his truck, or his boat, or doing any number of other things, could be deadly, to himself and/or others. If he ever got to the point that he had reached today, he was to do none of those things. He had made a long list of potentially dangerous activities and the outcomes if he blacked-out.

He got in his truck.

*Tick tock. Tick tock.*

The cab of the truck was warm. He had lowered the windows an inch before he had gone fishing, not that long ago, but it had not helped. Perspiration formed on his forehead, a drip running down the bridge of his nose. He removed his ball cap and pulled up his shirt to wipe his face.

The Quiet Man sat back and closed his eyes, taking deep breaths, blowing them out through his mouth. It was a depressurizing activity that he had worked on with his therapist. He thought it was silly at first, but he had found it effective on more than one occasion. His therapist had made him practice the breathing in his office, and then had given him an assignment to do it at home several times each day until it became habit.

The Quiet Man closed his eyes and counted each breath. His doctor had told him the counting was important. Then he slowly opened his eyes and looked through the trees ahead to the water beyond. The trees were in focus. His heart rate slowed. The Quiet Man started his truck.

He looped around the landing area until the back of his trailer faced the ramp, put the truck in reverse, and backed up. It was hard to see his small trailer through his rear window, so he used his side mirrors to back the trailer toward the water. He was good at it, had done it for many years, but he found now that he was in his sixties, he went a little slower. He no longer felt the need to show how good he was at backing up a trailer, and more often than not, if he went too fast, he ended up having to go forward then back up again. Better to go slow and get it where he wanted the first time.

Trailer in the water, the Quiet Man untied his boat and began to lead it to the trailer. If he did it just right, enough speed and distance from the dock, the boat would center on the trailer, and he could quickly hook it up and pull it from the water. With the rope attached to the front cleat in his hand, he pushed the boat from the dock with his foot, not too hard, waiting for it to get in the right position for him to move the rope forward.

At that moment, a wakeboard boat roared by the dock, the music blasting, girls on the boat screaming. The Quiet Man looked in that direction as it moved away before turning his attention back to his boat, but there was nothing he could do. The waves from the boat washed over the dock and through the landing. He held tight to the rope, but his boat turned sideways with the waves, pulled farther away until it was facing the opposite direction on the other side of his trailer.

He cursed under his breath, watching the wakeboard boat disappear around the point in front of the landing. Then he turned his attention back to his boat. It was a struggle, but he got the boat facing the right direction again and the waves calmed, allowing him to get it on the trailer.

He stood at the bow of his boat after locking the winch and stared out into the lake as the wakeboard boat reappeared around the point. The Quiet Man dropped his head, got in his truck, and pulled his boat out of the water.

*Tick toc. Tick tock.*

His fishing had been cut short by the wakeboard boat. It had roared by him as he had anchored in the shallows, using his sunglasses to try to look into the water to see the spawning fish that he sought. The waves from the boat had nearly sent him overboard, the Quiet Man hanging on to the gunwale, the kids in the boat laughing at him. The waves had made fishing nearly impossible, and when the boat had come by a second time, the water now cloudy with silt from the bottom, he had given up on fishing and had come off the water. Still, he’d had some success before being run off the water—three nice bluegills and two crappies that would make a fine meal.

He parked his truck and boat near where it had been in the lot and got out. He pulled the plug on the boat, pulled a few weeds from the trailer, then retrieved his fish. A fish-cleaning shack stood to the side of the parking lot, a weathered wood structure with a sagging roof that looked like it might collapse at any time. The windows were covered in wire screen to keep the bugs out. There were a few holes that had been poked in the mesh that someone had tried to repair by patching with duct tape, most of which hung loose.

The Quiet Man carried his bucket with fish inside to the shack, pulled a sunfish from the bucket, and laid it on the cleaning table. His filet knife made quick work of the fish. He scraped the carcass off the table and into the scrap bucket at the end of the table then put the filets into the plastic bag that he pulled from his pocket.

He worked quickly, the smell of dead fish strong, the flies buzzing in the scrap bucket and then on the fish he was cleaning and around his head. The last fish cleaned, he used the hose inside the shack to rinse off the table, and then turned it on his bucket, swishing the water around and then pouring it down the drain in the floor. Finally, he rinsed off his knife and wiped it on the towel on his belt.

As he reached for his bag of filets, the sound of the wakeboard boat turned his attention to the dock.

There were six on the boat, all looked to be in their early twenties; three boys and three girls. The boat hit the dock hard as they came in, causing the passengers to all reach out to keep from falling. One of the boys swore at the boy driving, the girls screaming. The music was blaring, heavy bass pulsing from the speakers.

Two boys jumped out, each with a rope, struggling to hold the big boat against the dock as the waves continued. The driver climbed out, beer in hand, and jogged toward the parking area. The Quiet Man watched the boy pass by his old Ford 150 to a new, black Tahoe, push a remote in his hand, and hop in. The SUV moved quickly toward the ramp, the windows opening and the music pouring out.

By the time the Tahoe began to back toward the water, the girls had made their way onto the dock, all with drinks in their hands. The Quiet Man watched.

The boy backing up the trailer was having difficulties; the trailer going to one side then the other. The boys on the dock shouted obscenities at him as he pulled forward, trying again. The Quiet Man’s breathing quickened, and he became aware of the tension in his hand gripping his filet knife. He wished he had slashed the tires on the Tahoe, but it was too late for that. He briefly considered walking down to the dock, letting them know what rude assholes they were, but he assumed it would only generate ridicule.

The boy backing in the trailer was still having trouble. He had stopped short of the water, the trailer at nearly a right angle to the truck. One of the other boys had walked up to the driver’s window, trying to convince him that he should let him handle the trailer.

The Quiet Man continued to watch, unmoving, the smell in the fish-cleaning station no longer registering with him. He unconsciously waved at the buzzing flies in front of his face then wiped sweat from his brow with the back of his free hand as his vision began to tunnel. The screams and shrieks from the girls were now pinpricks in his ears, the Quiet Man wincing with each.

His mouth had fallen open, his breaths more like pants, when his vision tunnel was suddenly invaded by a dark form passing in front of him. The Quiet Man’s eyes went wide, his head snapping back. One of the girls from the boat was walking by the shack.

She was an attractive blonde, her long hair pulled back and fit through the back of her baseball cap. She wore a powder blue T-shirt on top of a white bikini bottom, her flip flops slapping the pavement as she walked. A dirt trail broke off the parking area just past the fish-cleaning shack, through the woods for thirty yards to a restroom, the girl on her way. She took no notice of the Quiet Man—she had earbuds in, listening to music. The Quiet Man pushed open the door to the shack, holding the handle until it had shut without a sound, and followed.

*Tick tock. Tick tock.*