

JOHN
KAGEBEIN

Melees
with
Muses



JOHN
KAGEBEIN

Melees *with* Muses

THE SWORD & SCALPEL PRESS
ARKANSAS | NORWAY
2012

All poems and prose by John J. Kagebein.

Book design & typography by Klaus Nordby.

MELEES WITH MUSES ©2012 by John J. Kagebein.

All rights reserved.

Any reproduction or distribution of the contents of this book, whether physical or digital, in whole or in part, is strictly prohibited without the express permission of the copyright holder.

To request permissions regarding the content of MELEES WITH MUSES, contact John Kagebein:
JohnKagebein@gmail.com.

This book and its cover was designed & produced using Adobe InDesign CS5 & Photoshop CS5.
Yana typeface design: Laura Worthington.
Minion typeface design: Robert Slimbach.

For Lori—
everything, always.

AS TIME GOES BY

— 1988 —

Tick-tock tick-tock . . .
So counts the clock.

The seconds lost
To minutes turn;
As they exhaust,
The hours burn.

Empty days? Squandered years?
Lonely nights? Salty tears?

Dripping,
Tripping,
Slipping away?

The time is fleet
For your drum's beat.

The world endures
But, you will end.
So, how shall you
A lifetime spend?

Lived and loved and tasted?
Feared and loathed and wasted?

Falling,
Bawling,
Crawling away?

Each day on Earth
Has special worth.

There will be loss
And sometimes pain,
But there is joy
And much to gain!

To live's a choice—make it!
You get one chance—take it!

Driving,
Striving,
Thriving away!

A SUMMER STORM

— 1990 —

There was a maid, of raven hair,
Whose beauty stood beyond compare,
With flesh as pale as winter's snows,
And blushing lips that hint of rose.

She had a fragile, slender grace,
An elegantly chiseled face,
And stunning eyes of sky-blue tint,
That pierced the world with steely glint.

So many boys had plied their charms,
To hold her first within their arms.
But, all had failed, returning scarred.
Her heart, each claimed, was cold and hard.

A legend grew, as suitors fell,
Of soulless eyes, as cruel as Hell,
Whose shocking, icy, azure hue,
When turned your way, just saw right through.

With furtive looks, the rumors spread:
No *male* would ever share her bed;
And he would find naught but demise,
Whose heart sought love within her eyes.

And then one night, well after dark,
I crossed her path, out in the park.
She stood alone in summer's breeze,
Beneath the stars and swaying trees.

The moon was full and glowed, as twin,
Upon her alabaster skin.
A haunting, lovely sight was she,
That piqued my curiosity.

As I approached, she cocked her head
And pursed her lips of blushing red.
Her jet-black locks enwreathed her face,
Bestowing it a spectral grace.

But, it was with her piercing gaze,
She fully set my blood ablaze!
Those sky-blue pools, so deep and wide,
Intently staring, never shied.

Enrapt, I held her icy stare
And asked what she was doing there.
She turned her glance toward the stars
And pointed out which one was Mars.

We met there each ensuing night
To gaze at stars in shared delight.
We talked and laughed and told our tales
And walked along the wooded trails.

And then, one night, the rain began.
Beneath a bridge, we quickly ran.
There, by a streetlight's gentle glare,
I brushed the raindrops from her hair.

And it was then I did surmise,
The adoration in those eyes.
I swept her up, into my grasp.
Through parted lips, she breathed a gasp.

As thunder rolled and lightning flashed,
With violence, our two mouths crashed.
Her snowy flesh felt hot as flame
As I explored her fragile frame.

All inhibitions cast away,
Upon the wet, warm grass we lay.
I slipped her silky garments free
As she lay panting, under me.

With hungry mouths and probing hands,
We served our urgent lust's commands.
When, into hers, my body pulsed,
She bit my flesh, as she convulsed.

Entwined and writhing on the ground,
As storm was raging all around,
And tinged with scents of rain and blood,
I soon unleashed my passion's flood.

In dénouement, I cradled her,
And listened to her softly purr.
As we awaited clearer skies,
I kissed the teardrops from her eyes.

MY WILD FLOWER

— 1992 —

One day, while I was wandering,
A fresh wild flower caught my sight.
Its aspects had me pondering—
Exotic, erotic and bright.

I knew that, if I lingered long,
All that I had would soon be lost.
This bloom's allurements were so strong
I chose to stay and pay the cost.

And, for a brief, enraptured while,
I watched this blossom in the field,
So captivated by its style
And all the brilliance it revealed.

A wild young flower cannot stay
And soon is gone, without a trace.
When seasons change, it goes away
To grow in some far distant place.

And in that other, foreign land,
Its wilding nature intercedes.
And there, it finds another hand
To cultivate its many needs.

So here I sit, now pondering
The price I paid and what I bought,
While fickle *Fleur* is wandering
And I am left alone, with naught.

HELLO . . . GOODBYE

— 1994 —

Do you recall when first we met?
It was the fall; the sky was wet.
You stood alone; I was entranced.
You were unknown, yet I advanced . . .

I did not speak; your head you raised.
I stroked your cheek; you stood unfazed.
You gave a look, without remand
And then I took you by the hand . . .

Our hearts caught flame; our souls embraced.
We were not tame, nor were we chaste.
Our serenade was curious.
The love we made was furious . . .

But then, our smiles began to fade;
Across the miles, our love has frayed.
So now, I've paused, to analyze,
Just what has caused our love's demise . . .

Our hearts, I find, did so conspire,
Our minds, to blind, with passion's fire.
Beyond that hot desire to touch,
We haven't got in common, much . . .

But now, of lust, we are bereft;
And so, we just have nothing left.
I thought I'd spend my life with you,
But we must end and start anew . . .

Now I cannot deny,
There's just no more to try.
I will not live a lie,
And so, my love, that's why—

Although, it makes me cry,
I have to say . . .
Goodbye.

THERE IS, IN HER

— 1995 —

There is solace in her smile,
Belying wisdom,
Unafraid.

There is calmness in her style,
Suggesting knowledge,
Unbetrayed.

There is longing in her eyes,
Revealing desires,
Unaddressed.

There is boldness in her guise,
Confiding a pride,
Unsuppressed.

There is questing in her prose,
Insisting the truth,
Unvarnished.

There is passion in her pose,
Commanding my love,
Untarnished.

There is, in her, beyond measure,
All attributions I treasure.
Her soul, enshrined thus, revealing
My own, before its twin, kneeling.

I SAY TO EACH, NOW STAND AND SHOUT!

— 2010 —

Today, there is a choice to make.
Our lives and freedoms are at stake!
All hope to see a better day,
Depends on what we choose to say.

My *life* belongs to me—I Say!
My *liberty* or death—I Say!
My *property* is mine—I Say!
My *happiness* I seek—I Say!

Not “All for One”, nor “One for All”,
Such creeds of sacrifice must fall!
So every man reaps what he’s sown,
Let men decree—“To Each, His Own!”

His own thoughts to enact—To Each!
His own free choice to make—To Each!
His own wealth that he’s earned—To Each!
His life to live by right—To Each!

For liberty to be our course,
We must declare its proper source.
In civic halls across this land,
Today, free men, you must now stand!

Against their fascist laws—Now Stand!
Against their social plans—Now Stand!
Against their green designs—Now Stand!
For *individual rights*—Now Stand!

The time has come, free men—Engage!
And gird yourselves in righteous rage!
So there may be no chance of doubt,
I say to each—now *Stand* and *Shout*!

We won't submit to Islam—Shout!
My life's a carbon footprint—Shout!
I'm not my neighbor's keeper—Shout!
And vote to cast the bastards Out!

RAIN DANCE

— 2012 —

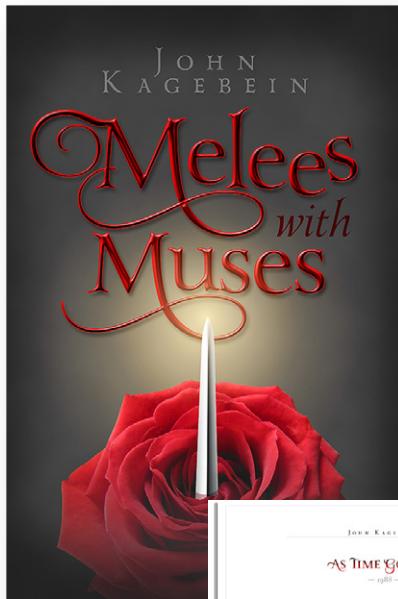
When the soft, sighing breeze starts carousing
And the cloud-swollen sky becomes gray,
Then the somnolent Sylph shall be rousing;
Into gathering storm, she will stray—
So sultrily stirring,
While whimsically whirring,
She, playfully purring, will stray!

While the discordant din is consorting
Thus to drench her domain as it sprays,
Does the Dryad delight in cavorting;
In the downpouring deluge, she sways—
So gleefully giggling,
While winsomely wiggling
And joyfully jiggling, she sways!

With the furious rainfall's completing,
Does full force of the frenzy allay.
Fast, the frolicsome Fay starts retreating;
From the field, she goes flitting away—
She, tipsily tripping,
While daintily dripping,
Goes blissfully bipping away!

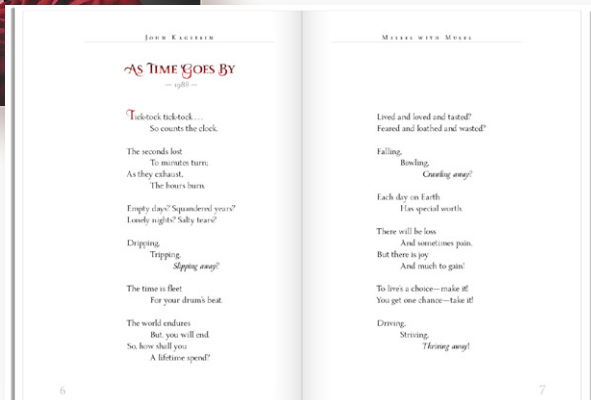
A WORD FROM THE AUTHOR

This PDF sampler contains but a few poems from the complete “Melees with Muses”. If you have enjoyed them, please consider purchasing a physical copy of the book or the complete PDF e-book. Links for purchasing copies can found by visiting www.JohnKagebein.com.



I welcome comments and can be contacted via email at JohnKagebein@gmail.com, via the [Melees with Muses Facebook](#) page and the John Kagebein Author Page at www.Goodreads.com.

Thank you,
John Kagebein



A WORD FROM THE DESIGNER

You might also be interested in the poems written and published by Klaus Nordby, who designed and typeset “Melees with Muses”. His poetry collection, “Poems Green Purple Blue Red,” can be explored by visiting www.NordbyVerse.com.

Klaus Nordby is also a superb photographer and his beautiful, art-quality prints of majestic Norwegian landscapes can be viewed and purchased at www.NorwayByNordby.com.



WITH “I’d rather face the wrath of Hell,” John Kagebein begins *MELEES WITH MUSES*, a chronologically arranged selection of his poetry. The young boy who wrote those words became the mature poet who continues to live and write with boldness and ardor.

His poems spin with the playfulness of “Rain Dance,” weep with the painful honesty of “Hello...Goodbye,” and inflame with the seduction of “The Dance,” all illustrating ingenious ways of shifting rhythm and lyric expression. Throughout, there is an imbued sense of gallantry. We are reminded that sincerity and allegiance to our values are hallmarks of the noble soul.

These carefully crafted poems range from the cool, sparkling clarity of thought to the fiery heat of passion, dual edges of the rapier Kagebein brandishes with both precision and zeal. *MELEES WITH MUSES* is his scabbard and his poems have been unsheathed.

Touché!

—GRACE DECICCO

