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## One Story Among Many

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# ONE STORY AMONG MANY

— by Carol Rothhammer Lackey

DO YOU WANT TO HEAR A STORY? A BEGINNING?  
A MIDDLE? A CLIMAX? AN END?  
DO YOU WANT TO HEAR A STORYTALE?

THERE IS A PARTIAL STORY, A THEME,  
I UNDERSTOOD ONE TIME: A STANDARD PLOT,  
COMMON EXPERIENCE, A PREDICTABLE ENDING.

A WRITER FOUND THE WAY, COMMON FOLK-WAYS.  
THE MYTH FOLLOWED ITS WAY--SUSPENSE--  
SET IN NATURE'S GREEN MEADOWS, HEROES, SHE-ROES.

THE PLOT GREW LONG, THE DANCERS LAUGHED,  
CATCHING SUNLIGHT IN THE SANDY, MEADOWED LAND.  
A SPIRIT OF THE NATURAL SUPERNATURAL BURST THE LIGHT.

THE SACRED SEABIRDS FILLED THE ALL-ENCOMPASSING SPACE  
(WHITE VISITORS, FOLLOWING THE TRACTORS, OUT OF PLACE),  
ABOVE THE PEOPLE, SEEKING SYNTHESIS--AND WHAT IS A HUMAN?

TRADITION DANCED ACROSS THE DANCERS' MINDS.  
CHANGE COURSED THROUGH THEIR VEINS, SURGING, SURGING.  
IN 1934, IT WAS AGAINST THE LAW TO BE AN INDIAN,

EVEN ON RAINY MOUNTAIN, EVEN ON A SCATHING HOT  
INDIAN AUGUST AFTERNOON, WHEN THE RED, RICH SOIL TURNED  
TO POWDER, DRY SO DRY, LIKE A WARRIOR'S WARPAINT POWDER.

MY BRAIN CAN'T TELL THE DIFFERENCE: DREAM? . . . REALITY?  
I SWEAT, CRINGE, CRY OUT, BUT CANNOT MOVE; ADRENALIN FLOWS  
AS THE RATTLER SLIDES CLOSER, CURVES, COILS, STRIKES.

REALITY IS ALL OF THIS: PAST-PERFECT, PRESENT, THEN.  
DO YOU WANT TO HEAR A STORY? DO YOU?  
PATIENCE, SILENCE, HUMILITY . . . SISTERS OF SORROW.

DO YOU WANT TO HEAR A STORY? HEAR THE WIND?  
COUNT THE HEARTBEATS? FEEL THE SAND BETWEEN YOUR TOES?  
COUNT THE POUNDING WAVES--ONE MOMENT'S SPAN?

I SAT AND WATCHED THE DANCERS DANCE.  
THEIR ANXIOUS, NERVOUS EYES, MOVING, DARTING.  
GOD'S LAUGHTER CAUGHT THEM NAKED, UNAWARE.

THE SEA BREEZE BLEW MY HAIR AND CLEANSED MY SOUL.  
SANDY DAMPNESS FILLED MY SENSES, SPIRIT.  
I LAY, SILENTLY, LISTENING AS THE TIDE CAME IN UPON ME.