

## Dreaming of Finishing a Dream

*By Dennis Payton Knight*

I have never had a single dream that finished up neatly with a graphic proclaiming “The End” and credits rolling by as I awakened. Instead, my dreams are usually interrupted by an insolent, demanding alarm clock. I reach out, find and hit the snooze button and try to get back into the action, but by then I have been kicked completely off the set.

I have accumulated a lifetime of unfinished dreams, by now likely exceeding twenty-five thousand, counting at least one for every night of my life. And who knows how many quadrillions of rapid eye movements that number must represent, but if I had a penny for every one of them, I could buy my own presidential election and finish that other dream.

I have read that Stravinsky, Wagner and Beethoven dreamt up in their sleep entire musical compositions, and had enough presence of mind to wake up and capture them on paper. Mary Kelly claimed to have dreamed up her Frankenstein character in her sleep. Robert Lewis Stevenson nightmared up Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and even Jonathan Livingston Seagull soared out of the dreams of his creator, Richard Bach.

Stephen King said he fell asleep on an airplane and dreamt about a fan kidnapping her favorite author and holding him hostage. When he awoke, he stayed at the airport and wrote the first fifty pages of his novel, *Misery*.

As a starving writer, I hope to wake some morning with a story already created and ready to flow from my cerebral cortex, through my nimble typing fingers, and on to the best seller lists. As it is, I haven't even the capacity for recalling a dream to jump out of bed and write down a single note.

Sometimes, however, a dream is dreamed well enough to plant itself as a virtually real memory in my cranium. For instance, a couple of years ago, I was on a road trip with my sister Maureen for a family wedding in northwestern Wyoming, the state where we grew up. On the return leg of our loop through the Black Hills we came within miles of Devil's Tower National Monument, and Maureen suggested we take a short detour and visit it again.

I told her I was sure I had been to Devil's Tower recently. As I recalled, it had sprung up like a colossal stump on an island between opposing lanes of the highway. I had passengers in the car, but no one would wake up and take in the view with me, so I just kept driving. Maureen looked as if I had come straight from the looney bin.

I was so sure of my recollection I tried to flesh out the story, but I couldn't even establish who my sleeping passengers had been. Perhaps they were siblings, offspring, cousins, in-laws and/or and co-workers. But it was probably the harem girls again. I never get those dreams finished either.