

ALIS VOLAT PROPRIIS

by

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FADE IN

INT. APARTMENT IN SOUTHEAST PORTLAND. NIGHT.

A writer's room, desk, bookshelves.

MAX the disheveled artist writes at his desk on his laptop. He's typing like mad. Like a man possessed. Like a Writer.

He stops. Reads back over what he's written, mouth moving silently. He despairs; it's crap. Pounds the delete key.

The screen is blank when he's done. He stares at the wall above his desk. Finally he closes his eyes.

He's alone, but then suddenly he's not. TAMA, 20s, lithe and tattooed, suddenly appears. She surveys the room and her gaze lands on Max.

TAMA

Are you a ghost?

MAX

No. Are you?

TAMA

I can walk through walls.

MAX

Ghost, possibly. But you could be on drugs. Or... superhero.

TAMA

I don't understand why I don't fall through floors.

MAX

Are you trying to fall through floors?

TAMA

That would suck.

Max finally opens his eyes and looks at her.

MAX

Good point. What would keep you from falling all the way through the Earth and up into the other sky and out into outer space...?

TAMA

Like I said. Suck.

MAX

Do you want to be my Muse?

TAMA

Would you write poetry to me?

MAX

Definitely.

TAMA

Then no. I hate poetry.

Max gets up and goes to a bookshelf. He starts flipping through books. Stops. Reads.

MAX

*Spilling themselves in the sun
bluebirds/ wing-mention their names
all day...*

Max looks at her.

MAX (CONT'D)

William Stafford. You can't tell me you don't like that.

Max returns to his desk. Starts to write.

TAMA

Are you writing about me?

MAX

I don't know yet. Can you ride a unicycle?

TAMA

Everyone can ride a unicycle.

MAX

I'm pretty sure that's not accurate.

TAMA

Aren't we in Portland?

MAX

Yes.

TAMA

I rest my case.

MAX

Look, it's not all bacon milkshakes and raising chickens. This is a great place to be a writer.

TAMA

Because it rains a lot?

MAX

Because there are tons of other writers and they're not islands of solitude. They're connected to each other.

TAMA

Like by the internet or something?

MAX

There are more writers' groups, per capita... I don't know but I'm sure there's a statistic.

TAMA

What I hear you saying is that it rains a lot.

Max returns to his desk with the book. He studies it a bit and starts to type.

Tama explores the room. Max types up a storm.

MAX

The things is, if you're a ghost, then whose ghost are you? A ghost means something tragic, something interesting happened.

TAMA

Not if you die of boredom.

MAX

People don't die of boredom.

TAMA

I'm pretty sure that's not accurate.

Tama goes to the spot where she first appeared in the room. She looks up, looks around.

Closes her eyes. Disappears.

Max types. Types. Really on a roll now.

MAX

Hey, can you belly dance? How about with a snake?

He looks up, realizes that Tama is gone. Shrugs, keeps writing.

Tama appears again. She peers over Max's shoulder to look at what he's writing.

TAMA

Snakes? Really?

MAX

"There is no law of man, god or physics that could keep that woman from... from..."

Tama is hopeful.

MAX (CONT'D)

"...from being enslaved by her love for him. Him, the cowboy, the gunfighter, the one man she would ever perform her belly dance with a snake for..."

Tama is annoyed. Max stops typing.

TAMA

You're way off course.

MAX

Damn.

Max starts hitting the backspace.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm getting rid of everything except the snake.

Tama turns to the wall and peers at closely. She reaches out and pokes it. Solid.

Max is typing again.

TAMA

I don't think I walked through the wall.

MAX

Look, if you're going to be a figment of my imagination, you're going to have to get your story straight.

TAMA

I think I just popped into existence. I stared at the wall and focused so intensely that the universe cried uncle and said, yes, you get to exist.

MAX

You're confused. I was the one staring at the wall.

TAMA

I'm the one staring at it now.

MAX

Snakes. Snakes, snaking in the forest... on the forest floor...

TAMA

You never asked my name.

Tama continuing to stare at the wall. Max types. But it's start and stop.

TAMA (CONT'D)

Let's say it's Tama.

Max can't write anymore. He gets up and joins her and stares at the wall.

MAX

Staring at the wall is a time-honored tradition for writers. All throughout history the greats have stared at walls.

TAMA

Some of the best stories walked right out of a stared-at wall. Don't take your eyes away.

MAX

I feel on the verge of something.

Tama steps back, leaving Max to stare at the wall. She sits at the desk and starts to write.

TAMA

She Flies With Her Own Wings.

Chapter One: Once upon a time, in a world almost exactly the same as the one you know and love, there was a girl named Tama. She had an imaginary friend who wasn't very bright. Let's say his name was Max.

Max's eyes widen and he starts to turn toward her and...

He disappears.

Tama smiles and keeps writing.

FADE OUT