

## The Begatitudes

By Mary Warner

So-and-so begat thus-and-such begat this-and-that begat thus-and-so. We humans, we begat like exuberant bunnies, we do, but not simply in a biological sense. Our minds are too active, our hands and legs too twitchy to limit ourselves to mere “Sperm, meet Egg” procreation. There’s more to be done, by golly. We must create on other levels. It’s imperative.

Art, science, music, economics, literature, *ad nauseum infinitum*. There’s nothing we chain of traveling monkeys won’t touch, won’t attempt. And after we are through begetting a particular creation, it breathes a life of its own, the begotten becoming the begetter in our stead. A non-human lineage is born and reproduces, with some creations, like biological entities, producing at a more prolific rate than others. Poe’s “The Raven,” Darwin’s Theory of Natural Selection, “The Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor,” Picasso’s cubism, Audubon’s birds, Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, Munch’s “The Scream,” Michelangelo’s “David.” Each of these works has spawned countless others. Add your personal favorites to the list. They’re seminal works and society knows it, practically agrees in unison for a change, although not necessarily upon birth. Sometimes it takes convincing to make people see the value in the ugly, unfamiliar baby that will go on to inspire great begetting.

Not always, though. Sometimes, the baby is beautiful upon earthly entry, kissed by Ms. Universe prior to delivery. The begotten is immediately accepted for its quality, its relevance, its gong-resounding effect on our hearts.

If the creator is especially adept at begetting, and his many works show a constancy of quality, along with longevity in relevance, it’s quite possible that Ms. Universe has also bestowed Muse status on him, ensuring much future begetting. (And you thought Muses were the musty stuff of Greek myth or the ladies of diaphanous costume in Xanadu. P’shaw!) Achieving Muse status is not a thing an individual in the traveling monkey chain can willfully accomplish. It happens quite in spite of any special efforts, and may not even be wanted by the begetter. It’s such a burden to be a Muse, what with all that responsibility for inspiration. Not to worry. The Muse must only beget, and the begotten will take care of the rest.

Could there be Muses lurking among us in this present age? Most surely, but that longevity of relevance can be a stickler. As History shakes her skirts, and the dust settles beneath her feet, certainly she will see that Dave Matthews Band was one of the entities kissed by Ms. Universe. How will she know? By counting up all the begotten the band’s music has sired.

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Blessed are the begetters, for their work shall live on in the begotten.

Blessed are the begotten, for they shall be tomorrow’s begetters.

7/30/2007

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This piece was written for and appears in the book “Dave Dances” by Lynda Jo Mykkanen Sokolowski, © 2008.