

An Island Tale of a Reclusive Poet, A Muse and the Search for Eternal Love

Author, poet and aquatic nomad Kenneth Zak pens his debut novel, chosen by Romance Writers of America as a Golden Heart® Award finalist

The Poet's Secret by Kenneth Zak

In *The Poet's Secret*, Elia Aloundra, a young lit student, sees the reclusive poet Cameron Beck recite a poem at a campus pub before he vanishes—for a second time. Ten years earlier, Beck had dropped from the public eye leaving only an acclaimed collection of odes to an anonymous muse and a decade of speculation over his disappearance.

Elia sets off in search of Beck, longing to know the man whose words have moved her so, hoping perhaps the ghost poet will unveil the secret to eternal love. What she doesn't know is that as her quest begins, Beck is perched atop a cliff on a remote Caribbean island and about to attempt suicide. As Elia faces off with Beck's protective circle on the exotic island hideaway, the same island where decades earlier a Spanish shipwreck entombing mystical Aztec relics was found, she finds herself swept up in the mystery of the muse. What Elia cannot fathom is that Beck's secret will change both their lives forever.

Author Kenneth Zak conceived of *The Poet's Secret* in a taverna on the island of Crete. At the time, he was on a three-year sabbatical—an adult “time out,” recovering from a life that had left him feeling hollow. For months he wrote, swam with sea turtles in the Aegean Sea and disappeared into the remote, antiquated Greek village of Avdou. He dedicated himself to “living in the present,” and says, “So many miracles happened during those months. I experienced a cleansing, a healing and an awakening, and I began to perceive light and water and imagery and words and the people around me like never before.”

Ken eventually returned to California, and then traveled to Bali, Mexico, Costa Rica, Thailand, Cambodia and South America, following the sea and surf with laptop in hand and continuing to write. As an avid surfer and free diver, Ken's life “has always been about the water. On so many occasions water has saved me, water has healed me, and water has reset my compass when I have been spinning in some uncontrollable vortex. So for me, my life and my love seem to be tied to returning to the great aquatic source, again and again, maybe just to fill the chasm that still exists in me, and maybe to some degree still exists in all of us.”

The Poet's Secret explores this great aquatic connection, spinning a suspenseful tale of passion, heartbreak, healing, life and love. Each chapter of *The Poet's Secret* begins with a short poem, causing the reader to slow down and contemplate—to be present in the moment—before continuing on the narrative journey.

THE POET'S SECRET



A NOVEL

KENNETH ZAK

BOOK DETAILS

October 5, 2015

Penju Publishing

Paperback, \$15.00

978-0-9903200-0-5

ebook, \$7.99

978-0-9903200-1-2

349 pages

Fiction | Romance | Suspense

PRBYTHEBOOK

To be published by Penju Publishing in October 2015, an early draft of *The Poet's Secret* was selected as a Golden Heart® Award finalist in romantic suspense by Romance Writers of America. Penju Publishing is a member of 1% for the Planet, and for every copy of *The Poet's Secret* sold, \$1 will also be donated to The Surfrider Foundation, an organization dedicated to preserving the earth's oceans, waves and beaches.

About the Author:

Born in Parma, Ohio, Kenneth Zak is an aquatic nomad of Bohemian-Polish ancestry. As a lad, he dove into Lake Erie in search of a silver coin. Decades later, he surfaced off the island of Crete with a tale filled with mystical sea turtles, sunken treasure and a young woman's search for a reclusive poet, his muse and the myth of eternal love.

A summa cum laude graduate of The Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Science in Business and special interest in Art History, Zak went on to receive his Juris Doctor and follow the waves to California. He eventually shut down a successful law practice in quest of a deeper purpose, freeing his creative self in a mountaintop village in Crete where he began his debut novel, *The Poet's Secret*, continuing work on the manuscript and his poetry in Bali, Costa Rica, Thailand, Cambodia and South America.

An avid surfer and free diver, Ken's passions also include reading, music, ocean swimming, the Tibetan Rites and yoga. He currently serves as General Counsel for a large private brokerage company and resides in San Diego, California. Learn more at www.kennethzak.com.

Story Ideas:

- How to Take an Adult "Time-Out": The story behind Ken's 3-year sabbatical on the Greek isle of Crete
- A Gentleman in the Midst: Breakthrough author and poet Kenneth Zak puts the "man" in romance writing
- Not Another Lawyer's Book: Bucking the tradition of Grisham, Kenneth Zak explores his outside-the-courtroom passions in debut novel
- The Art of Slow: Both the storyline and medium tie into the slow movement. ("I combine poetry with prose in an effort to slow the reader at the beginning of each chapter to contemplate and absorb the poetry, to be in that moment so to speak, before continuing on the narrative journey.")
- The Aquatic Nomad: Ken's experiences surfing, swimming and free diving around the world (including a near-death surfing experience in Uluwatu)
- Ken's commitment to conservation through 1% For the Planet and pledged donations to The Surfrider Foundation ("Perhaps only a poet would give away money before it is earned.")
- Breaking the Work/Life Barrier: Ken's journey abroad and how he now manages to balance his legal career with life as an explorer, poet, and philosopher. (As he says, "Why can't a Tuesday feel like a Saturday?")
- Locations in *The Poet's Secret*: Set in a fictional Caribbean island in The West Indies, the author also pays homage to his alma mater, Ohio State University, in the early pages of the book

Media Contact: Elena Meredith, 512.481.7096, elena@prbythebook.com



Author Kenneth Zak

Praise for the book:

The Poet's Secret was selected a Golden Heart® Award finalist by Romance Writers of America

"A beautifully crafted gem."
—Dirk Cussler, best-selling co-author of several Dirk Pitt adventure novels, with Clive Cussler

"A richly detailed novel suffused with exotic mystery and romance."
—Judy Reeves, writing provocateur and author of *Wild Women*, *Wild Voices*

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