

RON KOERTGE

Cinderella's Diary

I miss my stepmother. What a thing to say  
but it's true. The prince is so boring: four  
hours to dress and then the cheering throngs.  
Again. The page who holds the door is cute  
enough to eat. Where is he once Mr. Charming  
kisses my forehead goodnight?

Every morning I gaze out a casement window  
at the hunters, dark men with blood on their  
boots who joke and mount, their black trousers  
straining, rough beards, callused hands, selfish,  
abrupt . . .

Oh, dear diary—I am lost in ever after:  
those insufferable birds, someone in every  
room with a lute, the queen calling me to look  
at another painting of her son, this time  
holding the transparent slipper I wish  
I'd never seen.

## The Author Speaks!

I seem to be fatally attracted to heroes and heroines in fairy tales and comic books and movies. Over the years I've written about Superman and Dracula and King Kong and dozens of others. Students sometimes think that poets have mostly lofty thoughts. Not me. And if I have a lofty thought I try to get rid of it fast so something more interesting can get in.

I love the "What If?" principle in writing and use it all the time. What if Cinderella wasn't happy in Ever After? What if King Kong escaped with the blonde? What if Hester in *The Scarlet Letter* was proud of her A? What if the Seven Dwarfs got tired of having Snow White around? Write your own "What If?" poem.