

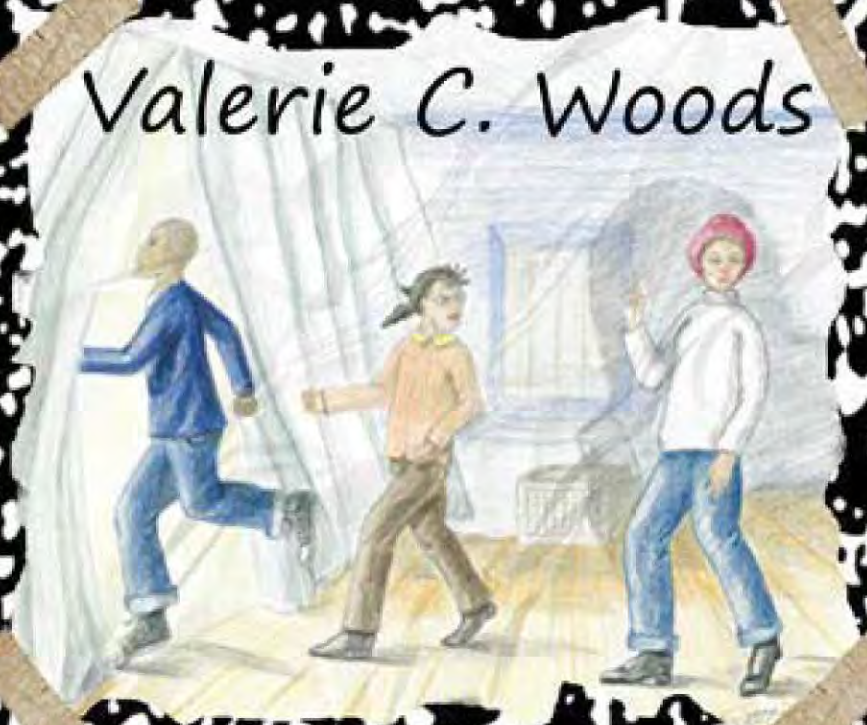
COMPOSITION BOOK

Katrin's Chronicles:
The Canon of
Jacqueline Dyanne

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Vol. 1

Valerie C. Woods



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(Excerpt)



This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Katrin's Chronicles:
The Canon of Jacqueline Dyanne, Vol. 1

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Initiation

August 7, 1971

The first year is the hardest. At least that's what Grand Anne says. I'd believe her if I were you. But then, you don't know my grandmother yet. Actually, I didn't know her as well as I thought. But in the past three years, I've gotten to know her extremely well.

In any case, the end of summer '68 initiated changes that continue to unfold to this day. It's vital that the events be fully chronicled. I mean, here we are three years down the road, and the stories, rumors and outright fabrications concerning the adventures of Jacqueline Dyanne DuBois, whom you will also get to know very well, are too numerous and over-the-top to count.

I've known J. Dyanne my entire life. I was her companion on the many occasions when she accomplished her most amazing accomplishments. And more to the point, because of my experience reporting for the Nightingale Elementary Gazette, I've filled numerous composition books with notes of our activities. Therefore, it seems only fitting that it is I, Katrin the Youngest, who can justly tell the tale. And it's time.

In a few short weeks, I begin another first-year experience. High School. So, Grand Anne gifted me with a typewriter for 8th grade graduation to formally document that other first year - the year of our initiation into a legacy of infinite mystery.

To begin, let me clear up a few things.

J. Dyanne does not communicate with little moon aliens or Martians. She does not have a crystal ball, nor was she responsible for the outcome of the last presidential election. And she certainly does not command the dead. She may speak with them from time to time, but command them? Who can do that? What could you possibly use to exert pressure to obey? I mean they're already dead. Perhaps threaten them with life?

The idea that J. Dyanne is some kind of evil sorceress is, to my way of thinking, perfectly silly, regardless of what certain people who live around the corner might think.

And, it's not fair to label me as abnormally different, either. Just because I memorized the Gettysburg Address doesn't make me a genius. I mean, it is a memorable piece of writing. Besides, one of my many uncles bet me I couldn't. And the money I subsequently won came in handy. But I admit, I love

the words. I mean, "Fourscore and seven years ago..." Sure, Lincoln could have said, "Eighty-seven years ago..." or "In 1776..." but the flow just isn't the same, you know? I confess, I love words and language. They have, quite literally, changed my life. But that's another story.

Finally, contrary to popular belief, J. Dyanne does not know everything. This is not a slur -- she'd say the same thing herself. However, let me also say that she does have an incisive, fiercely inquiring mind that grasps complex concepts with some degree of ease. It is this that gives those of lesser quickness the impression of omniscience.

For instance, many still believe that it was J. Dyanne who, in March 1968, prophesized the accident that resulted in the broken leg of one Derek Fremont, the then thirteen-year-old delinquent who still lives three houses down. But what do you expect will happen when you ride backwards on the handlebars of a hand-made, motorized bicycle? Even I could have predicted the result and I only possess the vision afforded by the glasses I have been forced to wear since the 4th grade.

Granted, the specificity with which J.

Dyanne was able to identify the location, number and severity of the fractured bones, as well as the fact that it was indeed his right leg and not the left that was put in a cast, may have fueled the rumors of prophecy. But really, she's just very observant.

But at the time, people were prone to believe anything.

It was Chicago, August 1968, a time of extraordinary things, when the unbelievable turned out to be very believable after all. Therefore, I will, through these official chronicles, do my humble best to clarify the chaos and set the record straight. If I don't, who will?

As Grand Anne also says, if you don't write your own history, someone else will make it up for you.

Although there are many instances of J. Dyanne's intellect and expanded awareness recounted among family and close friends, my goal here is to formally archive with as much accuracy as memory will allow, the canon of the true Jacqueline Dyanne - her life and work -- so far.

I will return to the beginning. A time when I was a regular sixth grader, innocent of what I now know was a turning point. It all began on a fairly ordinary day on the

South Side of Chicago in a neighborhood of modest homes and two-story apartment buildings, on tree-lined streets and fenced backyards. That day culminated in the first of a series of events to which the local press gave the fanciful title of "The Strange Case of the South Side Seer."

Nonsense, of course, but the media does like a fantastic story to feed the frenzy.

Chapter 1 -
Seventy-Five Forty-One
August 1968

It was in the waning days of summer, near the end of the period called "dog days." In ancient times, Sirius, the Dog Star, appeared in the heavens at sunrise, signaling the beginning of the hottest, muggiest days of the year. The ancients perceived it to be an evil time when dogs went mad, the seas churned to boiling point and men were prone to burning fevers. They used to sacrifice a brown dog to calm the raging Sirius, but the practice isn't so popular nowadays. Fortunately. But anything could happen during days like this. That's why I always carried high hopes for this time of year.

The air was saturated with anticipation. Something was going to happen. Something had to happen. It was time for that unknown, magic something that would make this a summer to remember. The thing maybe you'd write about or keep in your private memories forever. That's what I always hoped for August. It could be anything. Who knew that today would be one of those "anything" days.

The morning sun shimmered into the rooms I shared with J. Dyanne at 7541

Winthrop Avenue. We slept in what we called "the sweatbox," the rooms at the top of the house. Heat rises, you know, and even with the slight breeze through the screened windows I could tell it would be another hot, muggy day. As usual. The only unusual thing I noticed was I had wakened first. J. Dyanne was an eager, early riser, never wishing to waste time sleeping when she had projects to complete.

Her sleep seemed restless, perhaps even troubled. Hot as it was, she was curled, cocooned in the thin cotton top sheet. I slipped out of the room and down to breakfast careful not to disturb her.

At 7541 it was imperative to wear shoes at all times. I was glad of the furry slippers one of the Aunts had given the previous Christmas. Now, in August they weren't as plush, and perfect for mornings. You see, a fine dust covered the floors due to the fact that the structure was in a constant state of renovation by the owners. Neither J. Dyanne nor I had any say in this matter, as the owners were, in fact, our parents. Since we could always blame the smudges and stains on our clothes to the state of the house rather than our own careless or clumsy behavior, it was a fair

enough trade.

I was the youngest member to 7541 having arrived there eleven Aprils before. J. Dyanne was before me by almost two Octobers. The Elder Others, one male, the other female, had already gained years that ranged into the teens. Their physical presence was sporadic and often silent.

In the breakfast room, I opened the curtains to the window that looked out to the back porch and the yard beyond. Pater familias (yes, that's Latin for 'father' - as a future doctor, it only makes sense to begin my studies now) was in the garage working on his motorcycle. The grass needed cutting so I hoped J. Dyanne woke soon so we could get out before anyone else noticed. I prepared cold cereal. The Teen Elder Others were either still sleeping or onto their own adventures. The faithful hound, Dog, joined me when he smelled the preparation for my second course of buttered toast and grape jelly. He sniffed, ever hopeful, under the table. J. Dyanne arrived just as I finished reading the comics in the Chicago Sun-Times.

"You were talking in your sleep again, Katrin," she stated. "Something about a sword." I watched as she prepared her own

bowl of cereal and toast, carefully measuring out her portions. Precision and balance were very important to J. Dyanne, though the expression was sometimes inconsistent. For instance, food preparation was exact, but her dress code was often haphazard. To her, it was important to be healthy, but why waste valuable thinking on mere appearance? We definitely parted ways on that point. I thought about my appearance quite a lot. Well, at least compared to J. Dyanne.

"Very distracting," she continued. "Reading the Merlin stuff, I suppose." I was, but how did she know? Again, here was an example of J. Dyanne's uncanny ability to draw solid conclusions with a minimum of information. Sometimes it felt like she could even read my mind, but of course that was nonsense. Or so I believed at the time. Settling down with her meal and the sports section, she laid out the day's plan.

"Today, we'll shift our focus. The librarian at Hamilton Park promised me a new book on the early Dutch painters. We'll walk. It clears the mind." And then she dived into her food and the Sun-Times.

Why J. Dyanne would need her mind cleared I didn't then know. Or perhaps

she meant mine. I studied her profile. She had high cheekbones and a strong jaw line, which often led people who didn't know her well to believe she was unyielding. But these were the same people who had never seen her face soften with laughter and reveal the dimple on her right cheek. The restless night didn't show on her face. She seemed her usual alert self and ready for the day's excursion.

Usually a summer day would find us either playing softball or watching a baseball game on television. The Chicago Cubs had just finished a five game winning streak against the Atlanta Braves and were heading to Houston. Don't ask me why, as South Siders, we weren't White Sox fans, but there it is. It may have had something to do with the ivy-covered walls of the outfield at the Cubs' North Side ballpark. As first baseman Ernie Banks often said, they were the "friendly confines of Wrigley Field." In any case, since there was no game to watch that day, we could spend as much time as we wanted on our adventure. The proposed hike to the local library combined exercise for the body and the mind. It was likely to be at least 90 degrees again, and hopefully, the air conditioner was working at the

park's field house library.

We had once visited the Central Library down in the Loop, along with our grandmother, the aforementioned Grand Anne. Compared to the local library, this place was immense and extraordinary with marble staircases, mosaics, stained glass and, of course, tons of books. It was like some ancient sacred space to which we'd made a solemn pilgrimage.

Between them, Grand Anne and Mom were responsible for our reading habits. Birthday presents were often subscriptions to a new book club or renewal of Children's Highlights magazine. We were never refused library privileges. And when we were young, Mom would read to us every night.

Though many in our peer group did not understand our passion for reading, J. Dyanne and I often set out early, like today, to return the four or five books we'd read during the previous two weeks and select new ones. The central library downtown was a complicated journey via bus and L train. We looked forward to the completion of the new Lake-Dan Ryan train, which would be walking distance from the house and make travel to the

Loop a breeze. But even if the new L had been finished, now was not the time to try it on our own.

The city was pretty much under siege because 'Da Mare' - that would be the honorable mayor Richard J. Daley -- was preparing to welcome the nation's Democrats. A bunch of demonstrators protesting the Vietnam War, promoting civil rights and Black Power, you name it, were all coming to town, as well. This made the police more than usually, well, irritable. So the mayor was also preparing a welcome for the demonstrators: The National Guard. And he said they could shoot to kill. If necessary.

Things being what they were, seeking adventure close to home seemed like a promising enterprise to me. Besides, the parents had decreed that we could exercise our black power in the relative safety of our own neighborhood.

J. Dyanne was already clothed. She had chosen to adorn her athletic frame with the usual Keds, ankle socks, shorts and shirt and one of her many caps. This told me that the day could turn very active. I quickly consumed my remaining toast and left the room to dress for the day. Despite the heat, I wore yellow pedal pushers with

my Keds and ankle socks, topped with a white, sleeveless blouse. And although it took J. Dyanne less than five minutes to get ready, thanks to her expedient use of hats, I required more time, thanks to the struggle with my hair. Once straightened, my hair was thin and hard to control. The bangs were fine, most of the time, but if I wore it loose, it never stayed in place. The best option was to confine it into two pig-tails with rubber bands. By the end of the day, they were usually sticking straight out the back like wings, so I looked like I was in a perpetual high wind. But that couldn't be helped.

"Leave a note," J. Dyanne advised upon my return. "I don't know when we'll return. They'll want to know."

She was right, of course. The standard rule was to be home by the time the streetlights came on. And if we couldn't be spotted on our street or within reasonable shouting distance, we had to forewarn about our whereabouts. It still holds true today, even though I'm entering high school in less than three weeks. But, again, that's another story. As I said, the library was a previously approved destination. So, I scribbled a hasty outline of our plans

and secured it to the refrigerator with the cracked Chicago Cubs magnet.

"Here are our provisions." J. Dyanne was holding two brown paper bags. As we headed out, I peeked inside and was pleased to see my favorite cheese and crackers, plus PB&Js, apples and chips. It was going to be a long walk.

J. Dyanne collected our books, we slipped out the side door and walked the path to the front. Dog led the way, on the hunt for his favorite snack, old gum. It was still too early for much neighborhood traffic. The stone front porch where we normally convened with our friends was shady and inviting, but an excursion with J. Dyanne was hard to resist.

Chapter 2 - In the Churchyard

We had gone no more than three blocks when the first signs of the extraordinary nature of the day pierced my consciousness.

Dog was sniffing an empty pickle bag, alternately licking it and sneezing at the sour taste. I loved those pickles, especially paired with salted pumpkin seeds. I remember thinking I'd get one at Frieda's Corner Stop on the way back. But the succeeding turn of events changed my plans.

We had just passed the Kirkwood place. Their camper was parked in the backyard. Its windows were open and the plaid curtains were blowing in the summer breeze. Crossing the alley and entering the short street of small shops, we were hit with the strong combined smell of hair and nail care products wafting from the Cut 'n Curl, which was oddly empty of customers.

We had crossed the busy intersection at Vincennes Ave. when J. Dyanne, a brisk walker, began to lag behind. We were near the new building of the neighborhood school. Always one to enjoy conversation, I was busy explaining my dreams of swords and sorcery, and so had not noticed what

caught J. Dyanne's attention. At first I thought the book bag she carried was too heavy and was on the point of offering to carry it for a while. But cutting short my ramblings, I looked ahead.

The doors to the Methodist Church were open wide. Unusual, as it was a weekday. Further, a small news crew crowded a police car for space. And here were the neighborhood folks, murmuring and whispering amongst themselves.

A frisson went through the group as J. Dyanne and I came into view. The whispers got louder.

"There she is!" "She knew." "I bet she knew all along." I clearly heard Derek the delinquent, murmur, "Spooky, isn't it?"

Sixteen-year-old Patrice Kirkwood ran forward and clutched J. Dyanne's arm.

"Who did it? Where is he? Is he dead?" All this was panted out in a rush.

J. Dyanne shrugged out of Patrice's grasp as the small crowd held its collective breath. She studied the girl's tear-stained face. "So, it was Paul."

The whispers began again. "She knows." "She knew it was Paul!"

I too was startled. Patrice had not mentioned a name.

"Dyanne! You never said--"

She cut me off. "I'll explain later." She turned her attention to the nearly hysterical girl, who was again clutching at J. Dyanne's arm.

"I can't think with you grabbing at me. Stop it!" Dog barked to emphasize the point.

Patrice closed her arms tightly across her chest. She was sixteen going on twenty-five. Face, figure and attitude were a natural for those Jet magazine models. Teenage acne wouldn't dare pop up on Patrice. Her hair was so wavy and long it looked like a wig, but she made sure everyone knew it was her own by flinging it around whenever possible. The boys seemed to like it. And although her smooth, tawny skin needed no makeup, she wore it anyway. She was used to getting what she wanted and made quite a racket when she didn't.

"You have to find him," she whined.

"I don't 'have' to do anything," J. Dyanne retorted. "He might just show up on his own. I don't know."

"Yes, you do! You know something or you wouldn't be here," Patrice insisted.

"That's completely illogical," J. Dyanne

snapped. "Unless all these other people know something too."

If there's one thing that rubbed J. Dyanne the wrong way, it was ill-conceived deductions.

I intervened in my best journalistic manner. "Patrice, can you articulate the scenario for us?"

She stared at me. I remembered that not everyone enjoys building their word power from the Reader's Digest like me, and yeah, I was showing off a bit. As I mentioned earlier, I do love words. So I rephrased the question.

"What happened?"

Her puzzled look turned into a grateful and desperate plea. "Paul's been kidnapped. He could be dead! Or worse, crippled for life!"

I stole a glance at J. Dyanne, whose face showed not the slightest surprise. In fact, she didn't even seem to be listening, but looked restlessly around at the crowd. She let out a heavy sigh.

Patrice rambled on. It seems that just after 11:00pm the previous night, she received a call from Rev. Ingle demanding to speak with his son. Paul had missed his curfew and Rev. Ingle was convinced he was

still with Patrice, his steady girlfriend for nearly two years.

Patrice swore Paul had left her house promptly at 10:00pm. By midnight, Mrs. Ingle was worried enough to have the Rev go and search Paul's known hangouts. Carl Porter from Frieda's Corner Stop confirmed that Paul had come in after ten. Patrice recited everything Paul had purchased like root beer, donuts, the works. By 1:00am the Rev returned home, but Paul had never reached the parsonage. A note was found taped to the front door -- from the kidnapers. That's when they called the police. At this point, Patrice ran out of steam.

Bewildered, I asked, "What did the note say?"

"They won't tell. They say it will compromise the investigation," the girl wailed. J. Dyanne was now staring at Patrice with a shrewd look in her eyes. The distraught teen returned the look.

"Well?" she demanded. J. Dyanne gave a short laugh and pushed on.

"Come along, Katrin," she said. "We've got a ways to go." I followed as best I could, Dog lapping at our heels. The crowd murmured at our backs, listening as Patrice

continued her sob story.

"But, Dyanne, do you know something about this?" She kept walking.

"Perhaps. But I'm not going to discuss it in this crowd. You know I can't stand it." We pressed on, then, once clear of the crowd, she ducked back through the alley into the church parking lot.

We sat on a curb in the shade between Rev. Ingle's Buick LeSabre and a car I didn't recognize. J. Dyanne reached for the provisions, pulled out an apple and began munching. Her eyes were half-closed, not from savoring the red delicious, but from concentration. I recognized the signs. I went for the cheese, as with the hot weather, it would be ruined before long.

Biting into the crunchy saltine and soft cheese, I ventured a question. Sometimes these were welcomed, helping J. Dyanne's thinking process. I would know quickly enough if questions were an intrusion.

"How did you know this was about Paul?"

"It was obvious, Katrin. The commotion had to do with either the church itself or those connected to it. There was no apparent damage to the premises, so ergo, it was personal."

"But why not Reverend Ingle?" I queried.

"Would Patrice Kirkwood be hysterical over Reverend Ingle? Obviously, it wasn't the father, but the son." She continued munching. "Did you notice who else was there?"

I thought back to the scene. Nothing significant came to mind. "Just everyone you'd expect from the neighborhood."

"Coach Frazier?" countered J. Dyanne. "He lives over by the lake on South Shore Drive. What would bring him here, but news about his star running back? And did you notice Alderman Weaver's driver flirting with Joanie Stewart?"

At this point, I realized anew that even with my glasses, J. Dyanne saw much more than I. Now that she mentioned it, I did remember seeing the alderman's driver, Warren Murphy, looking as smooth as one of the tempting Temptations singers. He was smiling down at Joanie and must have been flirting, because Joanie's light-skinned face clearly showed the flush in her cheeks, which had nothing to do with cosmetics.

"Observation, Katrin. That's the biggest part of deduction."

"But admit it, Dyanne. You did know something more than simple observation."

She continued crunching on the apple. Again, she sighed.

"You're right. I did know something. It could have been a simple dream, but I should know better by now." She threw the apple core onto the grass and watched as Dog promptly disposed of it.

"This was the second one in as many days," J. Dyanne continued. "A young man, his face obscured, huddled in a darkened, cramped room. His right hand glowed slightly. Don't ask me why. His shirt had the number thirty-five on it and a crucifix was hanging on a chain around his neck. I thought it might be Paul, but you can never be too sure."

Okay, so I did know that J. Dyanne sometimes had dreams. The kind of dreams that often played out in real life. But it wasn't so much prophecy as an accumulation of information that seeped into the unconscious mind. Two months prior, I myself had an experience of this.

In early June, I dreamed I was preparing for a funeral and was undecided about a black hat. However, others in the dream told me not to make a decision because it hadn't been announced that the person had actually died. I woke to the radio newscast

pater familias always blasted from the console in the living room on school days. The report was about the shooting of presidential hopeful Bobby Kennedy. My subconscious had been listening to the news; it wasn't a psychic dream. And neither was this, I was sure. I was also determined to maintain my focus on the case.

"But why kidnap a PK?" I insisted. "Preachers don't have a lot of money for ransom."

"Ah, but Paul is more than a preacher's kid, isn't he? He's being courted by any number of top-ranked colleges. He could be the next Gale Sayers. And yet, if his father's influence is as strong as some people think, high schools across this city won't have a football season come autumn."

I was stunned. This was, after all, a huge sports town.

"But there's always football," I protested.

"Katrin... you ought to read the papers more, and not just the comics."

It's true. It had been hard enough keeping up since April's tragedy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the ensuing nationwide riots. But since that June experience with news creeping into my

dreams, I just went straight to the comics and sports. However, I'd somehow missed this tidbit of local sports news. It had probably been in the metro section, which was too close to the national politics of the day where it seemed like every time there was a leader to admire, somebody killed him. I just was not eager to read about world-wide riots or the next assassination with my morning cereal. My disquieting tangent into world affairs eased as J. Dyanne's steady voice brought me back to the present moment.

"Reverend Ingle advocates cutting sports programs. Too much violence between rival schools, both on and off the field. Too many drug-related incidents, again on and off field. He wants to bring the focus back to education and even religious studies, or at least prayer. And Alderman Weaver is listening. It could happen."

"I see. So you think somebody kidnapped Ingle's son as a threat or warning to ease up on his position?"

"Perhaps," mused J. Dyanne. "Even with high school sports, there's a lot riding on these games: money, careers, politics. So, perhaps--" J. Dyanne looked up, alert as a hunter. Listening intently, she rose and

jogged over to the open windows facing the lot, keeping close to the wall. I followed. Voices carried clearly on the summer wind.

"You don't understand. I've got to!" Rev. Ingle's distinctive baritone boomed across the sill. A lower, calmer voice murmured a response we couldn't hear. But Ingle continued.

"They'll cripple him! You read the letter." His voice broke. "I'll have to recant. I'll agree."

Looking up through the trees and the dappled sunlight, J. Dyanne sighed. I knew that with this sigh, she'd solved it. Apparently, something in the voices on the wind clinched it, but it was still a mystery to me.

To join the J. Dyanne mailing list or just
comment on the excerpt, send an email
to:

info@jdyanne.com



These chronicles begin in a much simpler time, back in the 20th century in fact, before laptops, the Internet, cell phones and text messaging were in everyday use. Although the time was technologically simple, the tangle of

human relationships was as complex as ever.

These are stories, regardless of the time in which they take place, to which I am sure you can relate. That is, if you relate to the idea that life is filled with mystery just waiting to be revealed. If you recognize that we all have talents waiting to be known and mastered. Or, if you understand that awakening to the truth of your own hidden power is not always easy, but is the only way to truly live, then you will surely relate.

If this sounds like you, then I invite you to delve into the Canon of Jacqueline Dyanne as chronicled by Katrin the Younger.

V.C. Woods

Remote Mountaintop Retreat, 2013

V.C. Woods is a writer, traveler and adventurer of long-standing. Her work has been filmed, televised and published throughout the U.S. and Canada. Maybe even overseas, too. It's difficult to keep track.

