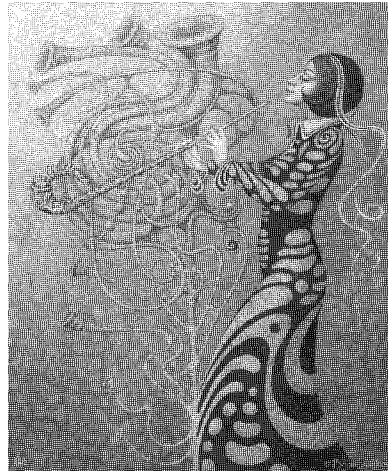


Super Short Mini Zines

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Elphonium by Larry Heyl



The King was bored. The King was restless. Peaceful times were great for his Kingdom. His subjects were happy and hearty.

elves, the elphin princess, and fool, and his groom stood their ground, and his groom stood their ground. Slowly sipping wine. captured by the music. A And then the faeries came. A dozen, then a hundred, dancing out of the woods. Soon the king, his fool, and his groom were surrounded by hundreds of faeries dancing naked in the meadow. The fool wanted to make a raunchy joke but his mouth wouldn't make the sounds. His lips wouldn't speak. Other elves appeared, charming fellows but none as beautiful as the elphin princess. The king noticed other mouthpieces on the horn. Soon the other elves were playing too, each on their own mouthpiece. Each creating counter-melodies out of one of the

They came to a clearing and under a pear tree standing alone they saw an elphin princess blowing a horn beyond description. Not a horn with one bell. Not a horn with its own sound. And the horn was not separate from the elphin princess. Somehow it grew right out of her. And the music flowed right out of her too. Tumbling through their minds like a river tumbling through the valley.

It was like nothing they had ever heard before. A sweet plaintive sound, sometimes like a flute but always changing. Music without thought, apparently without direction. But somehow it always seemed to get there. The phrases morphing into each other, one after the other, drawing them in.

They dismounted and the groom tended the horses. He didn't have to tie them. They weren't going anywhere.

The groom brought a sack of wine from his saddlebags and they

all three drank and listened to the music. But they didn't get drunk. They drank so slowly, sip by sip, the wine enhancing their senses, carrying them deeper and deeper into the music.

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changing melodies played by the harmonies underlying the ever bass patterns underlying the music. The music became denser with her too. Tumbling through their minds like a river tumbling through the valley.

They stepped lightly across the drawbridge and quickly broke into a canter, the King in the lead. He hadn't gone a quarter mile before he veered off onto a lightly used path into the woods. They slowed and the King let his horse pick the trail. Sometimes the path disappeared but his horse had a sense of direction beyond human abilities. When the trail forked his horse knew which way to go. The fool and the groom followed behind without effort. Their horses followed the King's horse. The King gave his horse his head.

The forest changed. It was now more open. Lighter. Brighter. The leaves on the trees shimmered. The grass waved in the breeze as if begging to be trod on. The horses slowed to a walk, a slow walk, somehow barely moving. And then they heard the music.