

# WOO WOO

the posthumous love story of



*By the author:*

**SECOND LISA**

paranormal fiction

– a biography of Leonardo da Vinci’s sister,  
and The ‘Mona Lisa’s’ lost identity.

(700 pages)

[www.secondlisa.org](http://www.secondlisa.org)

*Soon to be published:*

**The KIT & BASH trilogy:**

Winter’s Door

The Window of Spring

Season’s End

**MONKEY SEE MONKEY DO**

– an illustrated children’s book for ages 6 to 9.

Artist Emily Carr’s pet monkey,

Woo, teaches her own art class.

**THE CHILDHOOD PILLOW**

**PASSENGER**

**THE UNFINISHED WOMAN**

# WOO WOO

the posthumous love story of  
Miss Emily Carr

Veronica Knox



Copyright © 2012 Veronica Knox

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the author.

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication  
Knox, Veronica, 1949-  
Woo Woo: the posthumous love story of Miss Emily  
Carr / Veronica Knox.

ISBN 978-0-9877415-1-6

1. Carr, Emily, 1871-1945--Fiction. I. Title.

PS8621.N695W66 2012 C813'.6 C2012-906909-4

Editor: Linda Clement

Cover design: Iryna Spica & Veronica Knox

Text formatting: Spica Book Design

Cover photograph is a composite collage of two separate images:  
Head – *Emily Carr*, from photograph I-60892, courtesy of Royal BC  
Museum, BC Archives  
Body – *The Bride* – Julia Margaret Cameron, from the Royal  
Photographic Society collection, public domain

Second Edition

Printed and bound in Canada  
by Printorium Bookworks, Victoria B.C.

**Silent K Publishing:**  
Victoria, British Columbia

[www.woowoothe novel.com](http://www.woowoothe novel.com)  
[www.veronicaknox.com](http://www.veronicaknox.com)  
email: [veronica@veronicaknox.com](mailto:veronica@veronicaknox.com)

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

*- for Sarah and David -*



A decorative flourish consisting of several overlapping, elegant loops and a trailing tail that curves upwards and to the right.

*There's no time  
like the past  
to start again*

# *Table of Contents*

Preface	1
Emily Regrets	5
Scottie	19
Me & M.E.	23
Headline Interrupt-Us	26
Working the Graveyard Shift	41
Once Upon a Dime	49
The Voice of Reason	51
Who Knew? ... Woo Knew	57
Today's the Day	61
The Elephants in the Room	69
Valentine Massacre	75
Preposterous Posthumous	89
Daddy's Girl	94
Dearly Beloved	103
Regina	109
The Rest is Gravy	114
Thinking Inside the Box	117
The Corelli Factor	128
Whereabouts Known	143
Marie	145
Love During the Time of Woo Woo	149
A Journey Begins with the Last Step	154
Driving Miss Emily	159
Emily's Blog	173

Art, Sex, and Rock & Roll	177
Victoria Rules the Waves	184
The Garden of Other-Worldly Delights	189
The Monkey's Paw	197
First Impressions; Lasting Influence	201
Mrs. Noah	203
Bonfire of the Flatteries	211
You, Monkey... M.E. Mule	213
Monkeys are a Girl's Best Friend	219
My Little Eye	223
The Nearness of Woo	229
Bridge Over Troubled Ether	235
Monkey Busy-ness	244
Cold Feet, Lukewarm Hearts, & Hot Pursuit	249
It Was a Trip!	253
The Secret Garden	256
Something Borrowed; Someone Blue	258
A Double Wedding Not	262
The Honeymoon Sweet	264
Happy Ever Afterlife	267
Heaven Forefend	273
After the Math	275
Timeline	278
Acknowledgements	281
About the Author	283





## *Preface*

Painter and author, Emily Carr (1871 – 1945) was the honorary eighth member of the Canadian artists known as the ‘Group of Seven’. Her paintings have become the definitive portrait of the Canadian West and a tribute to her studies abroad of the impressionist movement.

As a young woman, Emily braved a solo expedition to a string of remote First Nations settlements of British Columbia. Her on-site illustrations of neglected totem poles disintegrating in decimated villages helped to document a fast-disappearing culture. When she was twenty-seven, she was given the native name ‘Klee Wyck, the laughing one’.

Emily became an eccentric icon of her hometown Victoria, on Vancouver Island. She was frequently seen in her later years, a dowdy plump old bird pushing a baby’s pram filled with pottery clay or groceries, accompanied by a tangle of the Griffon dogs she bred, and Woo, a Java monkey that perched on her shoulder, wearing a dress.

Emily eventually became famous for her curmudgeon ways, but she flaunted the rules of society at an early age. Something untoward in her teenage years caused her to reject the intimate loves of her life. One suitor in particular, pursued Emily to the end of her days.

Much local conjecture surrounds the hints of Emily’s lost love in her books as well as her letters and diaries.

Today, an historic mystery man continues to hover over Emily Carr’s memoirs like a ghost.



# Emily Carr

1871-1945

*Last night I was on my way to 'the place' again.  
How strange that I am so often conscious of that place.  
It is very familiar, but where is it? I am never quite there.*

*I look up at it and down on it  
and on the way I know the country all about it,  
but actually I never enter the estate.*

*I wonder if I ever shall.*

~ Emily Carr ~

*Hundreds and Thousands*

1938



*Don't pickle me away as a done.*

~ Emily Carr ~

## Emily Regrets



In retrospect, it probably wasn't wise to give a monkey the wedding rings. But, it was a surreal sight watching Woo hop towards the bride and groom balancing a silk pillow in one hand, and not much of a surprise when the ceremony disintegrated into farce. Trained animals rarely fail to disappoint at the optimum moment.

It was barely three weeks ago, on the last day of September, that I had the first inkling that I may have lost my mind mere days after I lost my heart. I was three kilometers outside the celebrated James Bay 'Carr Triangle' of Victoria on Vancouver Island – the old homestead of Miss Emily Carr, renowned international artist and iconic curmudgeon. It was my last stop on an interrupted tour – a small square footage of forever. Emily's final resting place. That was the week after I became a princess.

*"I was seventeen when I had my first heart attack.  
It took three more to actually kill me."*

These were the disembodied words I heard that changed my life and my capacity for rational thought.

I checked the date on my rolled up *Times-Colonist*. It was still 2012. The female voice declared itself to be a woman named Emily. It was no stretch to add the surname Carr, considering I was standing over her grave at the time.

I am twenty-seven-years-old, still an artist in search of everything and I declare so with pride. I am a freelance historian. Research is a rich field of dreams, and I paint as often as I can between the assignments that keep me sequestered in the rich archives of British Columbia.

A year ago, I was newly arrived in Victoria: fresh from graduation with a master's degree in Fine Arts from the University of Alberta, where an instructor had told me that one of my paintings reminded him of the work of Emily Carr. I checked and he was wrong, but I was flattered.

I didn't fully appreciate Van Gogh until after Emily softened the path to the French Impressionists. Emily's work was my Rosetta Stone for reading the earlier iconographic provenance of the debauched club of absinthe-soaked Old Boys, who had painted from the downtown brothels of feral Paris. I have long been grateful to her for that.

I resumed my painting techniques with a more exotic palette. Sure enough, Emily gave me the insight to experience emotional light. She slapped me black and blue with her colours. I felt indebted.

Subsequently, my affinity for Emily's style, led me to daydream that I may be Emily Carr reincarnated. I mean, I *am* a painter and writer, I *was* bitten by a monkey, and I've had *two* Old-English sheepdogs. What more evidence could there be?

Of course, a great deal more.

Reincarnation is a ridiculous leftover notion from my mother's New-Age books of the sixties. I am the next generation, and I have grown-up to realize metaphysics is all rot. Besides, hiking in the wilderness is not even on my list of things I like to do, and I hate any form of camping.

After I moved to Victoria, I traipsed the expected Emily tourist-routes: I checked out the city's art gallery, the museums, and Carr House, and poked around Emily's old neighbourhood. I saved visiting her burial place for last, but circumstances delayed paying tribute, so it was a year later when I finally made the pilgrimage and trod the gravel path to her grave. I was loaded down with a sketchbook and camera, pens and wax crayons, a roll of tissue paper, chocolate, newspaper, a potted plant of wild heartsease, and a feeling of reverent expectation.

Before I set off for the cemetery, I had a visitation from my romantic muse – an optimist, who writes fluent gibberish in flowery handwriting most unlike my own. It began as usual, with its melodramatic accent: *the startling thrill is imminent. I am ready to face death – absorbing the immortal presence of the great sharing. Today I remain open and receptive to the world of shadows.* After that it rambled for two whole pages about flowers and birds that, even now, escapes translation, but it served to inspire my trek. I savored the moment, devoting an entire afternoon to my expedition – to fancifully commune with Miss Emily Carr.

Scholars call ancient languages dead, but I was

about to experience the absence of life and poetry would turn out to have little to do with it.

I had envisioned the Ross Bay Cemetery as a formal gated community with a tree-lined approach that purposely and elegantly muffled the business of life, but a main road had been permitted to roar, invasively parallel to the assigned resting place of Victoria's fragile ex-citizens.

Undaunted, I closed my eyes and chose a direction to the left of the main entrance, sending a fanciful greeting ahead of me to the memory of Emily: "It's me Emily, where are you?"

I tramped and missed, determined to find Emily by some internal dowsing rod. Logic told me to scan for an impressive monument, and by doing so, I passed her by several times. I was growing irritable. My feet ached, I was starving, the sky had darkened, and I became increasingly unimpressed with my intuition. I finally had to consult a map posted on the caretaker's shack, and almost gave up. The diagram placed her in the U-shaped sector for Presbyterians, number 15 on the scale of descending points of interest.

I retraced my steps on a patchwork path between the graves to Emily's side, picking my way through a crazy-quilt landscape of haphazard stone squares and rectangles, and finally stared down at a bleak plot of low-lying real estate, designated H85E15. No great marble obelisk rose above her, and she was a matter of yards away from the heaviest road traffic.

No doubt, if such a thing exists, patriarch Richard Carr was turning in his grave over an intru-

sion worse than the brothel which had polluted his once pristine (Carr-controlled) neighborhood. If nothing else, the name Fairfield Road, named for its original fairground, was quintessential irony. Gasoline fumes and dust polluted the air. A pastoral paradise on fair ground it was not.

My first impression was denial. I had been shocked at the lack of a civic monument considering Emily's contribution to the culture and tourism of the area. At least, a marble sheepdog for loyalty I thought, or a miniature totem pole, or a bronze monkey in a dress. But no. All there was here, was a token flat plate in the ground void of organic sentiment, and a low crude stump of concrete offering Emily's grim statement of wanting to be buried sans coffin, rather than one of her snappier upbeat quotes.

The latest Carr House is a raised plinth-affair like a box garden gone to seed. According to the placement of her bronze plaque, Emily is crammed against the upper left-hand corner under a tangle of tawny thatch grass. There was a motley assortment of extraordinarily-grotesque pottery colored with neon markers which, ironically, made Emily's own ersatz First Nations-ware look like great art. Even Emily admitted her little cottage-industry venture of native souvenirs was a shameless imitation for tourist's small-change.

I felt the urge to go home and fill a vase with a bright bouquet of used long-stemmed paintbrushes for her. Instead, I placed the plain white planter of growing heartsease I had brought. It was the most appropriate sign of life I could leave behind to symbolize what I thought of cemeteries in general.

Emily' perfunctory *fan mail* of crude offerings looked like junk from a garage sale and reminded me of Jim Morrison's infamous Père Lachaise grave statue in Paris, graffiti'd in careless celebration of a creative life. In memoriam, not. His defaced bust (based on a likeness of Alexander the Great) was eventually stolen, but at least rock-star Jim once had a monument worth more than the price of a disposable camera. His tortured greatness had been commemorated by art, and in comparison, Emily's art had been down-played.

While it's true, that elsewhere in public places, Emily is celebrated in fine murals and bronze, here on her quintessential memorial spot, visited by hundreds of tourists, was a poor show of cursory anticlimactic sentiment.

I heard the chattering of a squirrel in the cedar branches above as I sat on the edge of the significantly - *dead* grass, and toasted Emily with warm ginger-ale. I wrote in my journal:

*Dear Em – Your death sucks.  
Your love-life lacks closure. Is this  
all there is? A damp house filled  
with estranged relics, a once-pas-  
toral neighborhood choked with hot  
real estate, and a patch of dried  
grass? At least art lives on, honored  
beyond the human disintegration  
of muscle and bone. How unfair.  
Consider yourself lucky to have  
missed the devolution.*

*Who is your mystery man? I'm  
dying to know. You are not here.*

“Say hi to Vincent for me,” I said to the creaking wind hovering over the spot where I guessed Emily’s head might be. I assumed the casket had been correctly oriented, as if putting the deceased to bed (the marker, being the headboard) but it was impossible to be sure.

I sketched the unkempt grave, noting the bleak inscription: *artist and author – lover of nature*. Accurate as may be, but decidedly Spartan. I put my tissue paper and wax crayons away, unused. The words were not worth the effort of a brass rubbing. “I’m bored to death,” I said out loud to the ground and added, “no disrespect intended.”

That’s when I heard the voice declaring itself to be Emily. It was a non-threatening statement delivered in a stage-whisper, and I captured it in a scribble by force of habit, thinking it was my fanciful imagination. My mind is always working, especially when I’m adrift on free time. People call it being lost in thought: I call it finding a *missing* thought. Duly recorded, I closed my notebook. Other than the voice, it had been a dull afternoon, but the sky had darkened and threatened rain, and I was out of chocolate.

Perception, intuitive hunches, and an insatiable curiosity, are the creative elements I bring to my professional game. I consider it smart business practice to run a permanently-receptive program, dialled to bloodhound mode, and like any reporter, I jot at opportune moments. Fleeting memos tend to retreat until anchored in stone or chiselled in ballpoint.

I constantly add to my growing Emily file, and I was particularly intrigued with everything paranormal at the moment. I had been softly debating ghosts for weeks with Jon. Real ones, not the elusive bits of data I refer to as literary ghosts, but then I speak for the skeptical side.

Being the star of Victoria, Emily was a regular subject of the queries that cluttered my in-basket. Wild theories collect around her cautious diaries, but I am a fact-finder. I stand firm behind science-non-fiction *over* the human need to embellish stories. Facts need a safe place to land, but I have a whimsical side and in a romantic moment I wrote this Haiku:

*meaningful nothings  
day in, day out  
stars fall on paper*

It's a somewhat futile gesture to stand, lording it over death, trying to bond with bones – the last resort for a fan seeking a celebrity rush. These are the places we can be sure our heroes will always be, in the secret gloat of their private hereafter. We can visit them to rub shoulders and hope that something rises. We have them cornered. We stand six feet above fame, alone with an elite species; if we are moved at all, we leave sobered by the immensities and trivialities of life and death. It's a sombre thought, that leaving one's flesh is called the *after-life* for a reason.

Standing quietly in the deepest reveries of communion, we can sometimes be transported internally from the sheer awe of being in the precise

longitude and latitude of greatness – a place these icons never were in life.

With Emily, it was different: hers was a family plot, and she had stood here as parents and siblings had been interred, perhaps even shivered to realize she too would take the same carriage ride in a box to this very address.

She may have foreseen her own post mortem procession: slipping silently down Government Street to Humboldt after crossing Douglas, and passing the Episcopal Reformed Church of her childhood, moving slowly in homage to Saint Ann's old convent, and Saint Joseph's hospital where sister Lizzie died, and finally wending up Fairfield to the eternal embrace of Ross Bay – a misnomer of ironic proportions. No fair field in sight. Just an overgrown landscape of low grey shapes causing the wind to whistle as it traveled west to the open sea, moaning through the straggle of interrupted dreams, and playing lonely tunes on the uneven rows of chewed bleached stones. Poetic indeed.

I couldn't stay long. Out of civic duty, I had left Jenner, my Irish Wolfhound, in the car with the windows rolled down as far as I dared. In a visit to Scotland's million old churches, I had seen notices posted at every lych-gate barring the presence of canines, with or without owners. Cats were free to prowl uninterrupted, and even added to the ambiance of the macabre, but dogs were high maintenance and left more high-profile *footprints*. Felines at least, had the dignity to bury their leavings like small coffins.

Judging by the past historic abuses of the original Pioneer cemetery downtown, and the number of

bag-free dog walkers in the Dallas Road off-leash park, it was unlikely anyone would care if a mongrel defiled an acre of uninspired horticulture such as this, but I take the responsibilities of dog ownership seriously.

Before I returned to the incarcerated Jenner, I snapped a few pictures of the less famous, but more thoughtful, markers the graveyard had to offer: the 'Pooley Angel', with traces of red vandalism still in its crevices; a miniature stone armchair holding a pair of petrified baby's booties, and a fireman's helmet that looked like a lava-coated relic from Pompeii.

It started to rain, and I began to crave Jasmine tea and Chicken Korma with sliced almonds and chutney, in an obscenely ravenous way. Hunger got me out of there before the deluge.

It was a morbid thought of mis-orientation which toyed with my brain on the drive home: a coffin twists and turns in its trajectory from undertaker to graveside, and being unadorned and symmetrical (unless there's a plaque on its lid) how would anyone know which way around the body lay? It brought weird thoughts of an obscure mortician's rune – a quick hieroglyph at one end of the casket before the lid closed that rubbed off with a quick polish at the last minute, like the chalk marks the parking meter squad leaves on one's *car* tires.

The depressing possibility of two cryptic plaques, one atop the other, was sadly uncreative to venerate an intrepid artist like Emily, and I had declared as much out loud to the bereft, overcast afternoon. Remorse spattered my windshield and

ran like greasy tears dripping down my car's face – down Emily Carr's face.

I drove on, even more committed to the prospect of one day being an urn of ashes tipped into the breeze on a spring morning.

When I got home, via the curry house from hell, I headed for the teapot and dog treats, and added a notation about the word 'incarcerated' in my journal, separating the words *in* and *car* and supplanting the word *Carr* and *care*. I wrote the word *superficial* and underlined it in red. The word 'car' dared me at every turn.

I reread the words I had heard: *my name is Emily. I was seventeen when I had my first heart attack. It took three more to actually kill me.*

I was sure if I stared at it long enough a subliminal gem would reveal itself.

I love the occult messages that lurk within languages like the perfect Victorian child, to be seen and not heard.