

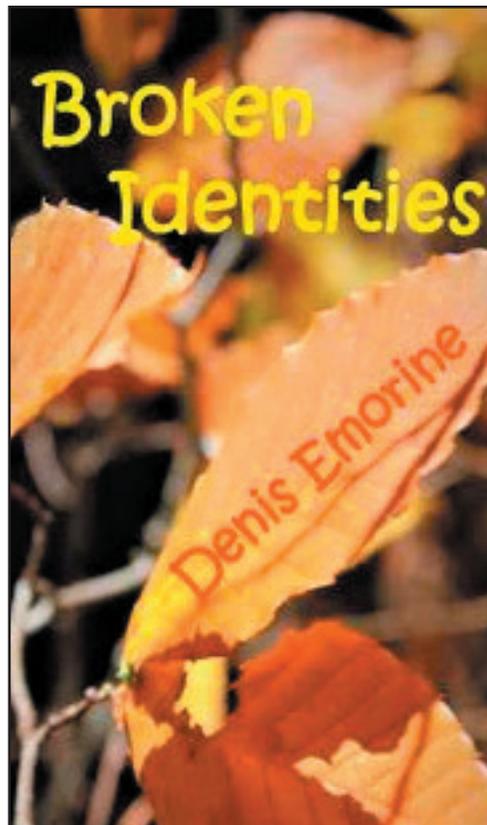
**The Silent Pendulum and Full Circle in Broken Identities, the new novella by Denis Emorine**

*Review by Michael Todd Steffen*

Denis Emorine's moving fidelity to his creative inspiration pulses at the heart of his new novella, *Broken Identities* (JEF Books, Arlington Heights, IL, ISBN 979-8284824-05-4). The book unfolds a sequel, a further denouement and conclusion to the public emergence of a writer begun in the 2017 novella *Death at Half-Mast*, where Emorine traces origins of "broken identities," foremost that of his fictional subject, Dominic Valarcher and his integral duality as a human being and his vocation as "the writer," the alternative appellation chiming like a formal constraint throughout the two narratives.

Laetitia, Dominic Valarcher's wife, reappears here with her fairy-esque character as muse, metaphorically represented playing private recitations for her husband at a piano topless, with her breasts exposed to him. The trope has flown my imagination to the cinema and the possibility of a movie perhaps with the title "The Naked Pianist." While arousing erotic tensions, the portrayal of Laetitia at the piano remains in a sensual rather than graphic character. In scenes beyond her home with Valarcher and her piano stool, we are also made to understand her true beauty, not just to Dominic, yet also her devotional character to him. She is his, his alone, strictly immune to other hungry suitors. This is essential in delineating Valarcher's deep sympathies for his wife as well as the excruciating extent of his dilemma in carrying his work, as it must be, fully to the public. The depth of Valarcher's sympathies has been noted also for its nominal ambiguity by Cristina Deptula, in the revelation of the writer's name, Dominic, for its more frequent feminine form, Dominique. ([synchchaos.com/2019/08](http://synchchaos.com/2019/08))

As the narrative is inevitably determined, the figure of inspiration is left to sink and fade at moments throughout the two stories with the realization of Valarcher's worldly success in publications and in presentations of his writing, public readings, notably with the emergence of a young Hungarian Literature researcher, Nóra. The young student's coming to life in the writer's presence and in his stirring desire makes an elastic and revisited topos. Emorine follows his subject as the writer oscillates. This goes like a pendulum, back and forth beside the piano of his exposed musician, between devotion to the original inspiration and its release in an expression of love toward the very work's appreciation. There we meet,



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again, the figure of the young Hungarian student Nóra, the fresh clay of consciousness awakening under the intelligence conveyed by the author.

This ontological movement of Emorine's fiction, between numinous, mnemonic origin and its naïve, "lively" and irresistible recipience, intersects with our civilization's deepest foundations and iconography, in new seminal terms and oppositions, the politics of East vs. West, in reminiscence and therapy between parent and child, and between the authentication of art through its intimate inspiration in contrast to its marketing epiphany in the rival world of publishers and university appointments.

Without giving away their charm and details, let it be noted this second story's beginning, with a partial disappearance of the writer at the end of his wits, comes full circle with the story's astonishing but convincing conclusion. A worthy read, for its charms, curiosity, resonance and much needed reminder (of the ever-vigilant light in darkness) under the flickering lamps of our busy desks.