

# Night Letters from the Underground

*by* James Lloyd Davis

I had an old Underwood typewriter on which I composed my first novel, kept it ever ready with a blank page. It was a magical machine and haunted. Brautigan's ghost lived inside, as did Saroyan's and Neruda's. They would sip grape Kool-Aid like it was Maneschewitz and talk for hours about duende. Lorca was there too, sneered most of the time, and only spoke once, while Neruda tried to bogart the Kool-Aid.

"Duende..." he said, "...what do you know of duende? The three of you together could not begin to comprehend it. It is laughable to imagine you would try. A wasteland dweller, a beach bum, a fisher of trout? I think not."

Impassioned as he was, his voice was loud and lyrical. The cords of his neck were all duendish and taut. We gave him a standing ovation, but Lorca would only shrug.

Raskolnikov and Lizaveta also lived in that typewriter. As ghosts, they became lovers. Rodion would strum the Underwood keys like a balalaika and Lizaveta would sing.

I had to pawn the typewriter back in 1979 and moved far away before I could redeem it. I miss it... the Underwood, the empty page, Lizaveta's sweet song.

