

A field without time

By Meghan Davy meghand@weeklynews.com | Posted: Tuesday, December 9, 2014 10:30 am

Sometimes great love stories happen on movie screens or in novels.

Other times, they happen right here at home.

Deephaven resident David Bosselmann exemplifies this reality, having just completed 'Penroe: In another field without time' with editor Barbara Krause. The book, a labor of love in the truest sense, is filled with the writings and poetry of Bosselmann's late wife and soul mate, Penny.

"She was my best friend, we just loved to hang out together," Bosselmann said.

'Penroe' fuses biography, poetry and memoir, with artistic renderings, personal photos and favorite works by T.S. Eliot and Mary Oliver, among others, complementing the symbolism in Penny's writing. Those closest to her have identified her as a nature mystic, a kindred spirit to Oliver, one her favorite poets who was also deeply attuned to the natural world.

Second chance love

Bosselmann met Penny at St. Luke Presbyterian Church in Deephaven in 1982. She was working as a dance therapist at Abbott Northwestern Hospital in Minneapolis helping patients, some of whom were recovering from eating disorders, heal their perspectives and understanding of their own bodies. Bosselmann was head of an investment advisory firm.

It was a second marriage for both; 47-year-old Penny had been divorced for seven years and 40-year-old Bosselmann was beginning the divorce process. They found they shared similar values, and bonded quickly over common interests — music, nature and animals.

The couple began spending time together, hiking in Carver Park, shopping in Wayzata and Excelsior on Saturday mornings, and taking trips to the North Shore along Lake Superior. They married in 1985.

Yet as with many great love stories, theirs was ultimately tinged with tragedy. Penny learned she had



A soulmate's tribute

Barbara Krause, left and David Bosselmann greet friends at a reception to celebrate the publication of 'Penroe: In another field without time,' Dec. 4 at the Marsh in Minnetonka.

ovarian cancer in the spring of 1999.

She maintained her positive outlook throughout her illness, seeking both traditional and alternative treatment methods and cherishing quality time with Bosselmann at the small Sarasota County, Fla. home they purchased as a sanctuary from her illness.

Following a nearly decade-long battle, Penny died of ovarian cancer in late December 2007. She was 72.

At her memorial service on Jan. 19, 2008, Bosselmann decided to write her biography as a memorial — to her love of nature, her indomitable spirit, and the wisdom and light she brought to his life and the lives of so many others.

Grieving deeply, it was over a year before he felt able to begin gathering information. He searched for people who had known Penny throughout her life, and through interviews, phone calls and emails, came to know the woman he had loved even more deeply, learning more about the person she had been before meeting him at St. Luke all those years ago.

His journey led to Penny's childhood home in Forrest, Ill. and a conversation with her oldest childhood friend in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

He recorded the difficult times Penny encountered — the loss of her father at age 12, a brain aneurysm in her twenties that robbed her of her ability to play musical instruments — as well as the love and laughter that friends, family and many adventures brought. Talking about her, sharing stories, helped him begin to heal.

Knowing intuitively that the project was too precious to be placed in the care of a random stranger, Bosselmann completed eight chapters for family and friends, then set out to find the perfect editor. A friend introduced him to Barbara Krause of Making Words Work.

"I knew immediately that this was the person, and didn't even ask for a writing sample. Barbara put her heart and soul into this. There has been lots of serendipity on this journey, and that continues to be the case to present day," Bosselmann said.

Krause has collaborated with writers on four book projects including 'Penroe.' She worked closely with Bosselmann, read Penny's personal writings, which included six spiral notebooks filled with poetry, and visited their home to see the room where Penny wrote, with a windowed-wall overlooking a wooded area. It felt like making a friend, one she never had the chance to meet in this lifetime.

"I feel like she has communicated with me in different ways. Penny's totem was an owl. People thought of her as wise, she wrote poems on owls and was in awe of them" Krause said. "Early this morning, beginning at about 5:30, I heard an owl outside my window, three different times. We have never heard

an owl in our woods, in all of the years we've lived there.”

The owl features prominently in the narrative, “speaking” in the passages concerning cancer, softening the hard, medical facts.

Krause saw Penny's writings as a gift that could offer a much wider audience of readers comfort, hope and guidance, particularly during difficult periods of life.

“I just bless it on it's journey, one that I know will help people,” Krause said.

Kirsten Johnson who met Penny at St. Luke's and introduced Bosselmann to Krause, was among the small, close group of loved ones gathered at The Marsh in Minnetonka last Thursday to celebrate the publication of 'Penroe.'

“I knew what she was doing, but didn't know the full extent of the beauty of her work,” Johnson said. “It is the deep sense of the power of the natural world, and conveys the importance of connection with it.”

'Penroe: In another field without time' is being sold at Excelsior Bay Books and at www.penroe.net. The book retails for \$15 and a percentage of the proceeds will go to the Nature Conservancy, one of Penny Bosslemann's favorite causes.

“I believe her wisdom will help readers with issues they may be facing in their own lives, Bosselmann said. “She had a lot of wisdom, and made me a much better person.”