

10,000 Dollar Pyramid

by Robert Vaughan

10,000

It's the square of 100, the exact age she died. Not square, more like a pear, a pair, paring sentences down to "golly gee" or "don't ya know." She lived in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, never set a digit in a single one. Until her last decade, too frugal to travel, her ten children brought tales of the world-at-large. Her friends called her Cleo not Cleopatra, they shared the same hook nose, nostrils flared.

Dollar

During the course of her life Cleo screwed every single President. Her favorite lover was John F. Kennedy, she adored his idiosyncrasies, his stooped, loopy gait. Every time they go-cart raced, she beat the living crap out of him. He'd suck on her toes until they'd wrinkle. Upon leaving, he'd place a dollar bill in her bathrobe. She kept them in an aluminum piggy bank in her basement.

Pyramid

The schemers came and went during her lifetime. Big money developers who lost fortunes in get-rich-quick vapors. Entire household savings could go like the collapse of a skyscraper, or a plunging meteor. She was a positioner, loved to gain from another's loss. Had a knack for sucker lists, loved the bait-and-switch, zig-zag scams, the apex of a prism. Cleo died in her sleep at the Luxor Hotel, lights beaming at the top.

