

1996

The Tennis Trilogy

Michael G. M. Cornelius
St. John Fisher College

[How has open access to Fisher Digital Publications benefited you?](#)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle>

 Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cornelius, Michael G. M. (1996) "The Tennis Trilogy," *The Angle*: Vol. 1996: Iss. 1, Article 14.
Available at: <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1996/iss1/14>

This document is posted at <http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/angle/vol1996/iss1/14> and is brought to you for free and open access by Fisher Digital Publications at St. John Fisher College. For more information, please contact fisherpub@sjfc.edu.

The Tennis Trilogy

Cover Page Footnote

Appeared in the issue: 1995/1996.

The Tennis Trilogy -Michael Cornelius

1. E-BORE
2. FOR MONICA
3. WHY I LIKE TENNIS

E-BORE

It's a simple thing, really -
Some synaptic response forces a necessary
yet involuntary ejection of non-noxious
fumes from an individual's oral cavity,
and everyone titters;
it breaks up the levity;
and the hollow popping
takes me back...

Sweat.
I remember sweat.
Not simple, everyday sweat,
but body-drenching,
shake your head wet
your socks are soaked
kind of sweat.
It's disgusting.
I feel alive.

I squint across the green battlefield.
My white armor clanks
against me;
my black sword is
caked with gut
and searching for blueblood.
It is hungry;
so am I.

I volley a barrage
of piercing foreshots
over the boundaries,
at mine enemy.
This is simple
brutality.
There is no
love

in my strategy.
This is war.

The fire is returned in kind
(thank you very much)
nothing more than I can handle;
I gallop to and fro
desperate, anxious, and unyielding.

The contest is near even;
the men are squared;
lives are on the line.
It is my blow.
I aim - high, hard
to penetrate -

no response.

All is quiet.

My sword clanks to the ground.

I am dumbfounded.

I sink to the cracked, discolored battlefield,
praising the heavens I have survived.
I am exhausted, spent, drenched;

but I am alive.

I may never leave this place, this battlefield, this court -
but today,

the victory is mine!

FOR MONICA

I never really met her;
I mean,
I felt
I did, seeing her so much and all, but
I didn't.

But she was still the best.

There I was -
all of fifteen
with a banged up leg
and the TV flying
one day just surfing
a wave, when I
heard this most

god-awful
gut-wrenching
ground-shattering
grunt -

UHHHHNNNN-HEEEEE!!!!!!!!!!

it sounded,
a giant unfinished sneeze,
coming from a
dainty deb
who was
all of fifteen
with a banged up leg
and flying not
with the TV but
on the TV and
boy, oh boy,
let me tell you:

I was in love.

Not with her.

No, not with her.

I mean, it just wouldn't it wasn't just not meant
no, not with her.

But with what she was doing, yes.

Sport.

Passion.

Love.

Tennis.

I watched intent, the eagle
as she waded through the mud
stroking and pounding and grunting
(my God how she could stroke and pound and grunt)

and I learned from her;
mimicked her;
watched and
studied her.

and I, too, began
to stroke and
to pound and
to grunt.

This was vitality;
this was essence;
this was ecstasy!]

Tennis,
I never knew your name but she
introduced us and it has been
beautiful ever since.

The grunter and the game and I
grew
and developed a bond
(although the grunter and I had never met);

we played together,
we learned together,
and we even won together;
although we never met, that grunter and I.

But she meant the world to me.

She was my savior; I loved it that much.

The in April '93,
there was a tragedy,
and the grunter was knocked off to the side.
Yet on and on I played,
me but not the maid;
for she had gone to run and hide.

By the wayside.

The grunt was silenced.

But I played and grew and won and soon forgot her.
I was still in love.

But not with her, no, not with her;
After all, we had never met.

WHY I LOVE TENNIS

I will never -

pitch a baseball like Nolan Ryan,
swing a club like Arnie Palmer,
run a track like Carl Lewis,
swim a swim like Mark Spitz,
drive a car like Richard Petty,
make a basket like Michael Jordan, or
make a touchdown like Emmitt Smith;

in fact,

I will never -

pitch a baseball like Lizzie Borden,
swing a club like Sawney Bean,
run a track like D.B. Cooper,
swim a swim like Papillon,
drive a car like Bonnie Clyde,
make a basket like Lynnette Fromme, or
make a touchdown like Charles Packer.

BUT,

every now and again,
just every now and again mind you,
I can stroke
a seeing-eye backhand
right down the line
just like Ivan Lendl
or an inside-outer
like Steffi Graf
and for that one brief
fifteen-love
I am the number one player
in the world
and all of my dreams
have come true.

Eat your heart out, John Wilkes Booth.