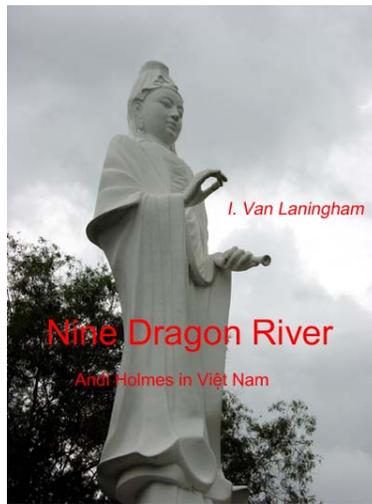


## I. Van Laningham - The "wo-man". A Questionable Etymology...by DK Ward



*For months I was thoroughly perplexed by a fellow writer of the same genre [lesbian fiction]: I didn't know if they were male, female, straight, lesbian, gay or transgender. It may not matter to many people, but for me, I'd like to know more about the person that touches me so exquisitely with their writing to a point where reality and fantasy merge so effortlessly that I don't know which is which.*

*So I asked and learned that I. Van's not a lesbian or even female. The author is a straight, married male, and most impressively is the fact that a straight man has created a character so believable, even lesbians can't tell the difference. If you visit I. Van's [website](#) (created for his character Andi Kristen Holmes), you too will be hard pressed to believe it is a fictional character.*

*Before I started this interview, I asked I. Van in which order should his series be read, and his response was, "I write them as they come to me, but everything's fitted into the timeline. As far as rereading stories in order, you can do that, but be aware that, like the Hornblower saga, chronological order has little relation to order written. Future stories can appear anywhere in a range from 1966 to around 1981 or 1982. And if you wait to read everything in order, you'll wait until I'm dead. I'd rather you didn't wait. ;-)" So don't be confused when you see the stories he has posted. They can, in fact, be read in any order as each stands on its own. And so, without further ado, let's get on with the interview. Enjoy.*

### **Who is I. Van?**

**I. Van:** Here's the "official" short bio: "When there was a priesthood of computer operators in the 60s, I was in it and I helped to create the Y2K bug. I was an anthropology major in college where I acquired a continuing interest in archaeology and archaeoastronomy, other places and other peoples. I both protested against and served in

the Vietnam War, spending all of 1970 in the Republic of *Việt Nam* in a place called *Củ Chi*. I have worked for the U.S. Postal Service, both as tool & parts clerk and rural mail carrier.

I was a joat for a mobile home park, obtained a forklift operator's license, worked in restaurants, sold shoes, lost my shirt as a luthier and clerked in bookstores (where I met my partner). I became a computer hardware tech for Compion which became Gould which became Motorola which turned me into a software engineer, at which trade I am currently unemployed. I have been a Buddhist for several years now, a development I can trace directly to my time in *Việt Nam*. In 2002, I was fortunate to be able to return for three weeks, and was able to revisit *Củ Chi*. and Sài Gòn as well as see new places, such as Hue and *Hà Nội*. I am an expert on the Mayan calendar and can read and write Mayan hieroglyphs with great difficulty."

Let's use that as a springboard. What else do I need to cover? What else would you like to know? I love Lego, Oz, Dr. Dolittle, depression glassware, Mission-style furniture and my Subaru. ;-)

### **With great difficulty?**

#### **I. Van:**

*With* great difficulty. First you take a text, which may or may not be intact but most likely isn't. Then you do what's called a "structural analysis," that is, break it out into its parts: subject (proper names), object (real objects, animals, proper names), verbs (including tense and aspect), dates, distance numbers. You can tell right off which parts are which, except when you can't ;-)

Once you're relatively sure of the structure, then you can start working on individual glyphs, deciding whether one is meant to be read whole (as in a jaguar head standing for "balam," the word for jaguar), or whether it's meant to be read syllabically (as in a glyph which contains the infixed and affixed syllables, "ba," "la" and "ma," giving a reading of

"balam(a)," where the final "a" is elided). Often you come across a glyph which you've never seen before, and you must decide in which order the syllables are to be read.

Then you take the transliteration and try to figure out what it means. That's not nearly as easy as it sounds, because there are very, very few Mayan-English dictionaries. There are dictionaries that go from a Mayan language to Spanish. I've worked extensively with Aulie & Aulie, a Ch'ol-Spanish & Spanish Ch'ol dictionary. There are a number of other famous dictionaries, but something most people don't realize is that there is still debate over which language (and I do mean language; by some counts, there are over 60 sometimes drastically unrelated Mayan languages) the inscriptions are written in. It's mostly accepted that the codices (the fig-bark-paper "books") are in Yukatek. The stone stelae were thought to have been written in Ch'ol in the south (Guatemala and Belize), but blending into Yukatek in the north (the Yucatan Peninsula). However, some brash

young scholars have claimed that the language is Chontal, and think they have a lot of evidence that that is so. Some experts don't agree with them, but it might be true.

It can take months and/or years to translate a passage. If you're me, you could take even longer. I don't do it full time and my artistic talent is low, which is why I concentrate on the calendar; I'm much more comfortable with the mathematical side of hieroglyphic writing.

Way more than you wanted to know ;-) Check out <http://www.pauahtun.org/Calendar/> for some of the stuff I've done with the Mayan calendar

### **To me, Andi is an entity of complex proportions, but who is Andi to I. Van?**

**I. Van:** That's a very hard question, one that I'm not sure I know the answer to.

I'm not sure that any author knows what the relationship is between themselves and their characters, simply because, regardless of what an author will claim (and you know, authors will say anything, being liars for hire), what goes on inside authors' heads and hearts and subconscious's is largely a mystery to all participants. So I don't think I can answer you with anything but examples.

In either 1997 or 1998, I was in a hotel room in Austin Texas watching a Xena rerun. It might have been one of the episodes with Callisto, but I can't be sure. A tall skinny blonde wearing fatigues and a boonie hat over hair that looked like she had chopped it off herself sat on the bed across from me; her clothes were dusted with reddish dirt from a place called Cu Chi, on the far side of the world, where I spent the last ten months of 1970.

*"You have been in Vietnam, I perceive," I said.*

*"And you didn't know there were women in 'Nam."*

*"Yeah, I did. I saluted a couple of enlisted women one time, not nurses."*

*"You're going to need to know a lot more than that if you're going to tell my stories."*

She was right. Despite knowing that there *were* a few women there, I knew nothing about them. I did some research, and found this on [Women in Vietnam](#): *"The military, which prided itself on the records it kept in Vietnam --counting the enemy number of weapons captured, for example -- cannot to this day say with certainty how many women served. The army that sent them never bothered to count them. The estimate most frequently given is that a total of 7,500 served in the military in Vietnam."* (Laura Palmer, "Shrapnel in the Heart")

Think of that: "The army that sent them never bothered to count them."

Which left plenty of room for Andi Holmes (who had arrived complete with name) to have adventures in Vietnam, a country that, 36 years later, I still think is probably the

most beautiful on earth. I suppose that in one sense, Andi is a way I can relive my time in country, although she's much more complex than that.

In fact, she's so complex and interesting I wish I could take credit for her creation, but I can't. I didn't steal her from anyone else, but if I had consciously set out to create a character, she would not have been someone I would have designed. I might have chosen an archaeologist or anthropologist--my fields of study in college--and she would never have been in Vietnam; I rarely thought about 'Nam at all, much less what it might have meant to a woman stationed there. I guess I might have designed someone a little like Aeryn Sun, from *Farscape*--but I didn't have that choice.

And I most certainly would never have "made" her a lesbian. I've considered myself a feminist since second-wave feminist times, but I gave gay and lesbian issues hardly any thought at all. Pretty much, "Yeah, 'those people' deserve rights, next question."

I would have written what I knew, not embarked on a research program--homework!--designed to drag me up to the speed a *character* needed me at. If I had made a checklist of things I knew next to nothing about, pretty much everything Andi was would have been on it: female vet, lesbian, PI, spoke several languages fluently, she's athletic ... She carries a switchblade, and around 1975 begins to study iaido, a Japanese sword art; I am very uncomfortable with edged weapons.

I cook, but I'm creeped out by my own knives.

So while Andi and I do have things in common--we're the same age, which dictates that most stories about her will fit into the "historical" category, we both love to read, love to cook, we both love to observe and figure things out, solve problems, and we're both alcoholics--there are things about her that are completely alien to me. Almost everything else that Andi is demands research. Her time, her place, her childhood, her identity, her way of being in the world--none of these things come "naturally" to me, I have to work at imagining them, and I have to do a whacking great amount of reading and research in order to imagine them.

She has places to go, things to do, stories to tell. She drives the relationship; I run alongside the car

**Deliberate attempts at humor always ring false to me, it's those subtle 'no idea they're coming' lines that get me. Like Jane Fletcher, you have a natural ability of pulling it off effortlessly. Do you see it in your writing? It is apparent in your outward personality?**

**I. Van:** Golly, you sure know the way to my heart. I *love* being compared to Jane Fletcher, whose *Walls of Westernfort* I just finished and greatly admire, in any way at all. But I never think about humor when I'm writing. What humor there is comes from the character and the relationships.

For example, I don't think Andi has much of a sense of humor; she's too busy trying to calculate all the angles. She'll play off someone else's funny lines, maybe, but she's not one to see the humor in a situation on her own. And Katie Cooley, from "Hat Trick," although she's a very different person from Andi, is similar in that way; too busy looking beneath the surface. However, Joy Mallon, from the same story, sees the absurdist perspective in everything. She thinks she's shallow, but isn't, and that tension seems to grow humor.

I don't consciously put funny stuff in my writing and I don't usually care for books that are funny or slapstick. I must have received an overdose reading Science Fiction in the 60s. I think I tried a half-page of a Janet Evanovich once. I do like a book that has a self-deprecating view of itself, like Deborah Powell's two books that are set in Houston in the 30s. And I do like Mabel Maney's Nancy Clue/Cherry Aimless parodies; I have to read them in small doses, however.

Humor apparent in my outward personality? I'm hilarious. I'd give you a reference, but all my friends and acquaintances are academics, or some other sort of unreliable narrator.

**Of your shorts posted so far, my personal favorite is Hat Trick. Can you tell us where the idea came from? Who are these women that easily captured our imagination and walked across our minds and hearts?**

**I. Van:** Andi came to me whole, made; her name, her height, her brothers and her parents, even the missionary childhood came with her. But Katie was different; it began with a sentence: "I moved out because my brothers made me give them really good blowjobs." Which I can trace to reading *Can't Touch My Soul: A Guide for Lesbian Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse*, by Donna Rafanello, some time ago. After I had the sentence, I realized she was very young when she moved out, sixteen: where did she move to? In with whom? She'd need friends, help, a job. And then I saw her roll out from behind a counter and use a grabber to get hats from a top shelf.

That image pretty much crystallized the story. I used to live in that town, the one with the biggest hatter in Central Illinois, very much as described in the story. It wasn't called Irma's; the story required a female owner who would give a sixteen-year-old a job and training and not care about her wheels.

The wheels arrived as part of Katie, a part that had shaped her whole life. The odd thing is that I did very little research; I think I looked up how armrests worked in wheelchairs, and discovered that Katie would have been using an old-style chair, one that weighed more than the kind that became popular a very few years after the story. But her attitude and the way she felt about her disability--I followed Nicola Griffith's principle: "Make shit up." I've done more research now, and luckily, I seem to have got most of it right.

Joy's appearance was based on someone I knew years ago, who, when asked why he didn't go to work for Microsoft, drew himself up to his full 4'10" height and announced with outrage, "I will NEVER suck Satan's dick!" But I don't think the two have much in

common except red hair. I simply wondered what sort of person would be fascinated with Katie and want to know more. Some aspects of her personality were there from the start--persistent as a cat--but her job as an Ozark Airlines stewardess (still called that in 1980) came out of discussions with Audrey over several early drafts. I think Audrey suggested it, but once on the table it was so Joy's job there was no question.

What surprised me about the story was that it was purely romance; most story ideas come to me with criminal aspects intact, but this time there wasn't anything like that: all I had was Katie and Joy in the hat shop.

Oh, and the word problem, which in the early drafts was this godawful long complicated mess; the cocoon didn't fall off until almost the final draft, when Joy's answer suddenly fell out of the sky and changed the question.

I was gratified with the responses to the story when it was published on the Radclyffe list; I had wondered if I would want to revisit Katie and Joy, but wasn't certain until I saw that people enjoyed them as much as I did. Now I wonder why I had any doubts. ;-) They'll be back.

### **Have you read much lesbian fiction written by men?**

**I. Van:** Hardly any. I'm interested in lesbian crime fiction and lesbian romance. I know of no lesbian romance written by men, and the only male who writes lesbian crime fiction is J.T. Langdon, and I understand his is extremely erotic PWP [Ed. Plot? What plot?] (not that there's anything wrong with that ;-)) but I prefer reading about characters. There's a straight couple writing as "Tinker Marks," but Audrey read their book and didn't care for it, so I never bothered to read it myself.

I have read a little Thomas Roche, however, who's written some lesbian vampire stories and some lesbian erotica. I quite like what I've read of his. He did a couple of stories for Alyson's *Set in Stone*, which Angela Brown edited. I just found out about his book, *Dark Matter*, which I ordered but haven't received yet.

I've read non-fiction by Pat Califia, who's a hell of a writer, but his fiction is still on the TBR [Ed. To Be Read] pile.

I've read books featuring non-lesbian female protagonists and written by men, however. I'm very fond of Robert Eversz' Nina Zero series, for example. That might be because he likes my stuff a whole lot; I'm no more immune to flattery than anyone else. I also like Ron Miller's *Velda*, Mark Troy's Val Lyon stories and Joe Konrath's Jack Daniels series.

### **What do you say to those people who believe men shouldn't write lesbian fiction?**

**I. Van:** I looked up *Set in Stone* at Amazon yesterday when I was answering question 5. This quote is taken from the first customer review, which is labeled "What's with the men?":

*"Don't get me wrong. Most of the stories in this latest lesbian erotica anthology rock hard. Well written and clever, there are several writers within these pages I will be looking for again. But personally, I object to the inclusion of men in a book about lesbians. They have their own anthologies, don't they? What happened to the idea of having a sacred space for women only?"*

I'd read a book by her. She expresses herself well.

It's her right not to read lesbian fiction, or non-fiction for that matter, written by men. I've got an acquaintance who says, "Life is too short to read everything, so I cut 50% off the top by not reading women writers." That's his right, up to the point where he says he's not being sexist by picking that particular 50%. (I try hard to make up for him, but darn it, there are a few men that persist in writing good stuff. Thich Nhat Hanh, for instance. And Larry Niven. And Robert Eversz.)

I won't read *Mein Kampf*, for political reasons, although I did read Albert Speer's apology. It's perfectly OK for someone not to read my stuff for political reasons. (In fact, I can see that there exist cases in which it would be mandatory for someone to deny herself the pleasure of reading my writings. You know who you are; you should stop now.)

It's when we get into the "I don't think *anyone* should be allowed to read Ivan's stuff about lesbians" that I start to worry. That's the sort of thinking that gets evolution and queer theory tossed out of curricula all over the country. The same sort of thinking that denies men can be feminists is the same sort of essentialist, reductive thinking that says women can't be allowed to control their own bodies, and disabled people can't be allowed to control their own sexuality, and all of us mere mortals can't be allowed to love whom we love.

Human beings have this really nifty inbuilt categorizer to help us make critically important decisions on hardly any data at all; I'm sure it's related to how primates were able to decide over hundreds of thousands of years what fruit was good to eat and what fruit would kill monkeys. "Blue fruit, good fruit. Red fruit, bad fruit." The trouble is we use the thing to categorize people we meet, whether in person, on the page, or on the net. And people we haven't met. When's the last time Congress met us? Should we talk about the Patriot Act?

**What do you think you bring to the [lesbian fiction] genre? What are you hoping to achieve?**

I. Van: I've stewed over this question for several days now, and I really can't make it any better or any more direct than this, which is odd, because what I do is, usually, "say more."

In my day job, I'm a software engineer. I've been in that profession for quite a long time

now, and one of the aspects about my job that I have always liked the most is building tools, or even better, building tools to make tools, to help people get their jobs done better. I *love* to build things and, after they're built, push and prod and poke them until they are *right*.

I don't believe I am trying to "achieve" something beyond telling stories, and in the process, telling about some times and places and people I have affection and love for. I'm just trying to build things, and to get them right. Once they're right, maybe they'll be tools that will enable a reader to see and feel the way the world was, once upon a time.

### **What do we have to look forward to in the future from I. Van?**

**I. Van:** More Andi Holmes stories, naturally. I'm in the process of finishing two novels, one taking place in 1971 New Jersey, and the other in 1974-1975 Chicago. A few other stories threaten to become novels, but they're still in the "I got this great opening scene" stage.

There's at least one more Katie Cooley & Joy Mallon story, but I have no idea yet how long or how short that will be. I'm pretty sure it involves raspberries.

Andi's Great-Aunt Drusilla features in a WWI story. I swear her name is not homage to the Buffy character. There are a few Drusillas in my family tree and I chose her name and started the story at least three years ago. Only in the last few months have I become a Buffy addict.

And I'm working on at least one story set in 1873 Nebraska, near Broken Bow, a time when sod houses were common and the US Government was beginning to force the Pawnee from their ancestral territories; romantic friendships and Boston marriages were accepted and sometimes celebrated; the feminization of the teaching profession ensured that nearly 90% of frontier teachers were young single women; and the Homestead Act of 1863 allowed *anyone* to file a claim as long as they were 21 *or* the head of a household. Indians weren't considered "anyone," of course; the Homestead Act had special strictures designed to ensure that Native Americans couldn't get their land back. I.e., only a citizen or someone who could become a citizen (Indians became citizens only in 1924--four years *after* women got the vote), and only someone "who has never borne arms against the United States Government or given aid and comfort to its enemies" could file. But African-Americans and single, divorced, orphaned and widowed women could and did file, hold and prove their claims.

Anti-homosexual reaction and suspicion about those young single teachers didn't really become widespread until the late 20s, providing a relatively safe time of better than 50 years when same-sex life partnerships went unremarked and unpersecuted in the US. Andi's Great-grandfather's generation holds a lot of interest and promise, I think.

A friend asked me the other day if I was planning to teleport Andi back to 1873 Nebraska. I said no, Andi was a product of her times and needed to stay in them. "Are you going to have all new characters?" he asked.

"It's odd," I said, "that whenever I become interested in a time or place, Andi just happens to have ancestors or relatives there."

"What about the future?"

I wouldn't rule it out.

### **Will you ever cross genres, or mix them? Will we see Capt. Andi Holmes of a Starfleet 079 in the year 3030 at some point?**

**I. Van:** I grew up reading science fiction, where there's a long tradition of mixing and blending: mystery, vampire, horror, western, naval, historical, romance. I only discovered mystery & crime fiction through SF/mystery crossovers: Fredric Brown, Anthony Boucher, and Asimov's Wendell Urth stories, among others. SF remained my first love until I was persuaded, in the mid-eighties by a friend who ran a bookstore, to read Sara Paretsky, Sue Grafton and Linda Barnes.

You won't see Andi herself outside of her time, which stretches from about 1966 to 1981 or 1982, but you might see stories starring descendents of relatives of hers; she's not going to have kids.

The year 3030? I don't think so, that's a little too close for comfort.

If I were to write any SF, you'd find that I've been influenced by Jack Vance (who, as John Holbrook Vance, wrote terrific mysteries you can't buy anymore). Maybe the year 30,031 ("Tuesday, 28 Jan, 30,031: I was on a routine trip home from the far reaches of the Cygnus Arm. I'd spent too long on an isolated little farming world named Tazenda, where it seemed they would rather discuss philosophical minutiae than shovel manure out of the barn. I found myself arguing with, rather than instructing, the autopilot. ..."), when I'd think the boundaries separating genders would have long ago dissolved. If you look at John Varley's Eight Worlds series, you see he's done a lot of very interesting exploration of people crossing from male to female and back again, and the consequences of having that kind of freedom on society. I can kind of dimly envisage some of the stages beyond, where sex and gender are so fluid they might change and intermix depending on mood. If I write any SF, that's when it'll be set. *Way* the hell out there.

Starfleet? I don't think so. I love Star Trek, even Enterprise, which pretty much mangled what feeble continuity the other four shows had managed to maintain, but I can't believe in a universe where good triumphs simply because it's good and because heroes are good people. Humans are far more complex than that. Hell, *cats* are more complex than that. As Solzhenitsyn says: "Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and

evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties--but right through every human heart--and all human hearts."

I think that's something eternally and infinitely true, and infinitely worth exploring.

**If you had to sit in a room for an hour with one of these three, which would you choose and why? A: Bill Clinton B: Rosie O'Donnell C: Ernest Miller Hemingway**

I. Van: I've talked to politicians before, even politicians whose politics I like, but all they want to talk about is politics. And I'd want to thump that particular politico on his head. "Don't ask, don't tell? I thought you had a *backbone*! Feh!"

I did a paper once on Hemingway. I don't like his writing, it's Strunk & White on steroids; I don't like his macho attitude, look where it got him; and I don't approve of murdering animals for sport. I had to read a shitload of his stuff for the paper, and I hated it all. I had to read his biography; it made me hate him and his life. I was so depressed I wanted to dig him up and shoot him again. I do like the Bad Hemingway contest, however.

But Rosie's smart, funny and interesting. Even if I couldn't think of anything to say, she would, and she'd make me laugh.

There are very few celebrities I'd spend time with voluntarily, however. "I'm busy that day."

**You've mentioned your wife a few times, am I correct in presuming she's very supportive of what you write? How did it come about that you introduced the idea of writing lesbian fiction to her?**

I. Van: Audrey is incredibly supportive; she is both my biggest fan and my most constructive critic. She's also my editor; I won't let stories out until she's gone over them thoroughly. I trust her judgment and her instincts; when she says, "*This* ought to be the first line of the story," I think, "How could I not have seen that?"

The only story that didn't go through that process was the first, "The Working Girls Go By," and I think it shows. It does an OK job of setting the scene and introducing readers to Andi, but I don't think the prose is up to the later stories.

There's a reason for that, an additional reason besides the fact that I've learned quite a bit since writing it. Audrey didn't see "Working Girls" until it was published online, because I kept the writing and submitting of it a secret, for a number of really dumb reasons. What with one thing and another, I ended up telling her the day the story went live. I've

regretted that ever since, but I still have a strong urge to keep details of stories to myself until I get the first draft done--with a beginning, middle and ending--before I show the stories to her.

It's probably silly, but I have the feeling that if I let anyone see something before it has a real framework, or talk about it too much, the showing or talking will turn it into something I will no longer want to write. But once I get those bones in place, I can bang around with it quite a bit, and Audrey's critiques and opinions are essential to the process. Sometimes stories will change shape dramatically, but they've always been better for going through the process.

Audrey's a superb writer and a feminist philosopher, a professor at the U of Utah. She teaches philosophy of education, gender studies and race studies. She's taught courses in queer theory, John Dewey, the history of women in education and whiteness theory. She's had articles in important educational journals (including *Harvard Educational Review*).

She also writes very funny stories about her family and friends. See <http://www.pauahtun.org/Audrey/>

### **Your stories depict elaborate and specific details, how do you come about these accuracies?**

**I. Van:** I think it's important to have correct information, where possible, in all stories, but it's even more important to do so in historical fiction. It's also important not to obsess; the single greatest cause of going out of business in Japanese software companies is *failure to release a product*. I freely admit that I tend to err on the side of obsession; I really like to get things *right*.

That last may be an occupational hazard; software engineering is a strategy game where you try to out-think the computer and plan ahead as many steps as you can, the way you do in chess. You win when you have a bug-free program that does what you told it to do. That almost never happens, usually because you don't have all the facts before you start coding. So there's a tendency to research, research, research and put off coding until the last minute; that's a practice that pretty much ensures that you add in a lot of bugs.

I do have a good memory, and one of the ways it's good is that I can remember smells and the way it felt to *be* in a place, not merely how a place looked or sounded. I'm not always right, though; when I went back to Vietnam after 32 years, I was astonished at how humid it was. I remembered the heat, but not the humidity.

So I may recall many places and details, but memories decay like radioactive elements. Those memories with the longest half-lives are the ones acquired in childhood and youth. That's why I check and double-check most things I put in my stories; Google and [maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com) are your friends. Both of these are fabulous resources for writers today. I could have told you in "Down by the Song Saigon" how the city smelled and sounded off the top of my head, but the street names that I used came from a 1970 map that I found a copy of on the net.

I could write the same stories I do without the net, but things would take much, much longer. And some stories wouldn't be written at all; I would never have dreamed of setting a story in Nebraska homesteading days if I hadn't blundered into Nebraska Studies, at <http://www.nebraskastudies.org/> Another story, as yet unpublished, features exhibitions at the Field Museum and the Art Institute in Chicago; part of the reason the story is set at the time it is is because those were real exhibitions on those dates. Without those particular art & artifact exhibits, it would be a very different story; I was lucky that both museums list their calendars for previous years online. (When I told Audrey and a friend that, after they'd read it, they said, "We just assumed they were real because that's the way you do things." Hmmph. I think I should get more credit!)

Of course, ideas will come from anywhere; I thought about setting something during WWI after I saw *Iron Jawed Angels* with Hilary Swank. I'm still in the "almost obsession" stage of that one. There are mountains of good books available that will tell you all kinds of things that simply aren't on the net. But I often rely on the net to help me blunder in a particular direction, or to help me track down which resources I need to get from the library.

**This truly has been one of the most enlightening interviews I've conducted and it was my pleasure entirely. So, thank you, I. Van, for taking time to sit down and answer these questions.**

**Is there anything you'd like to leave us with? Quotes of inspiration? Things we may not know about I. Van?**

**I. Van:** You've been \*incredibly\* patient. Thank *you*.

I can't think of anything that says it better than the quote from Solzhenitsyn (*The Gulag Archipelago*, 1974) that Andi uses on her home page:

"Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties—but right through every human heart—and all human hearts."

Oh, and "Know when to stop."