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Litquake Presents Summer of Ecstatic Love Fundraiser



From left to right, *Damascena* cover, author Holly Payne and Sufi dancers

Book launch for new novel *Damascena* from Marin-based author Holly Lynn Payne celebrates the poet Rumi and themes of transformation, healing and forgiveness in an evening that begins with dramatic readings both in English and Farsi of the poet's work, an electrifying demonstration of Sema, a sacred dance associated with the tradition of the Whirling Dervish, and ends with a "Rumi-rave" with guests invited to open themselves up to the rapture of the dance floor via soundtrack put together by the author along with noted journalist and yoga teacher Mark Morford

June 5 at Fort Mason, 7pm; Tickets are \$40.00 and include a signed copy of the book, wine and dance party; proceeds to benefit Litquake

April 28 San Francisco – Litquake presents Summer of Ecstatic Love, a book launch for Holly Payne's latest book, *Damascena: The Tale of Roses and Rumi*. The evening will feature a reading of one of Rumi's most famous poems, *The Turn*, in both English and Farsi by Tamim Ansary, noted author of *Games Without Rules: The Often-Interrupted History of Afghanistan*.

Also, Sufi Mariam Baker—one of the senior teachers of the Mevlevi Order, which is of Rumi's lineage—will perform the sacred and electrifying dance known as Sema, with live musical accompaniment.

After the readings and performance the dance floor then opens for all guests, with a sumptuous soundtrack put together by the author along with noted journalist and yoga teacher Mark Morford.

This special evening of words, wine and ecstatic dance benefits Litquake and the staging of the 2014 festival coming in October.

Author Payne has a knack for writing novels that aren't memoirs per-se, but rather reflect some her own real life's twists and turns. Her previous novel, *A Kingdom of Simplicity*, told the true story of an Amish youth who has to come to terms with the drunk driver who killed his two sisters, but was inspired by her own coming to terms of forgiving a drunk driver who hit her (she had to learn to walk again, and grew up in Amish country). The new book relates to her recent grueling experience confronting an unexpected divorce. "Like many who go through something tragic like this, I found myself standing on the threshold of transformation. By chance I rediscovered Rumi whose poems pose the idea that one way to rebuild is to transform grief into love is through embracing ecstatic experience—in this case dancing. "Writing *Damascena* offered me the chance to return to my heart and realize it was broken—open."

What: Litquake Presents Summer of Ecstatic Love

When: June 5th, 7:00pm

Where: Fort Mason Center, 2 Marina Blvd, SF CA

Admission: \$40.00

Tickets: www.litquake.org or [here](#)

About *Damascena*

Simply but elegantly told, *Damascena* is a work of historical fiction that unravels the mystery surrounding a legendary orphaned girl, who discovers her gift of turning roses into oil. Named after the flowering *rosa damascena*, the girl reluctantly assumes the role of a living saint for the miracles she performs—longing for the only one that matters: finding her mother. Deeply wounded by the separation since birth, *Damascena* undergoes a riveting transformation when she meets Rumi and finally discovers the secret of the rose. Imbued with historical research, the book is inspired by the devastating disappearance of Rumi's most lauded spiritual companion, Shams of Tabriz.

DAMASCENA

By Holly Lynn Payne

A Skywriter Books Trade Paperback Original

Publication date: June 1, 2014

ISBN: 978-0-9822797-4-8 * Price: \$20.00 * Pages: 348

About Holly Payne

Holly Payne is an internationally published Discover Great New Writers author, writing coach and founder of Skywriter Books, a digital press and publishing consultancy. Her last book, *Kingdom of Simplicity*, won the Benjamin Franklin Award and was nominated for a national book award in Belgium. She has served on the faculty of the Academy of Art University, California College of the Arts and Stanford, and lives with her young daughter.

About Litquake

