

BLISS *Victoria*

OUR BEST WINTER
WHITE JOURNAL

January 16, 1908

Dear Elizabeth,

I just wanted to let you know
I adore you, and how much you mean to me.
You're my dearest friend, the person
I turn to with my dreams and innermost
thoughts. You're always there for me, ready
to lend me your shoulder. And that means
I know I can always count on your
unconditional support, and you'll keep me
on track when I'm on a bit of a
wild goose chase. You're an incredible person, mother.
I'm so lucky to have you.

CHOCOLATE
VALENTINE
DELIGHTS

A FRENCH
HOUSE BECKONS

January/February 2008

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Dear Friends

A new season is upon us, fresh with pure snow and glittering icicles. In this issue of Victoria, we celebrate the elegance and calm of winter white, from fashion to lovely objects for your home. Diminutive luxuries—diamonds, pearls, and silver—enrich this lovely palette.

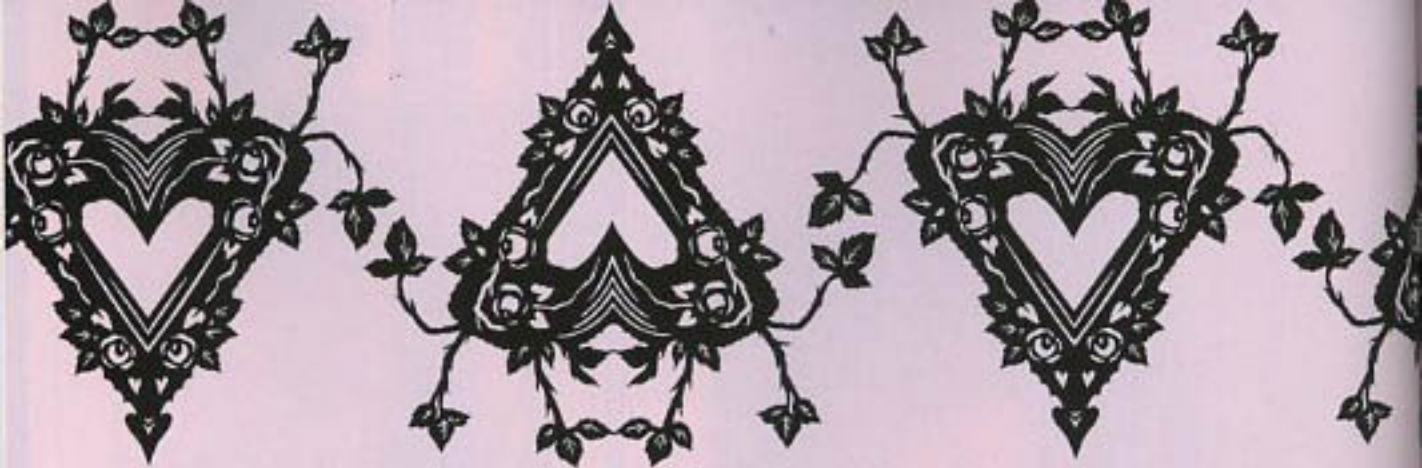
Victoria introduces two brilliant contributors for 2008: my dear friend Alexandra Stoddard, writer-in-residence (above left), and Sharyn Sewell, artist-in-residence. Both live artfully and blissfully. Their work will appear regularly on these pages.

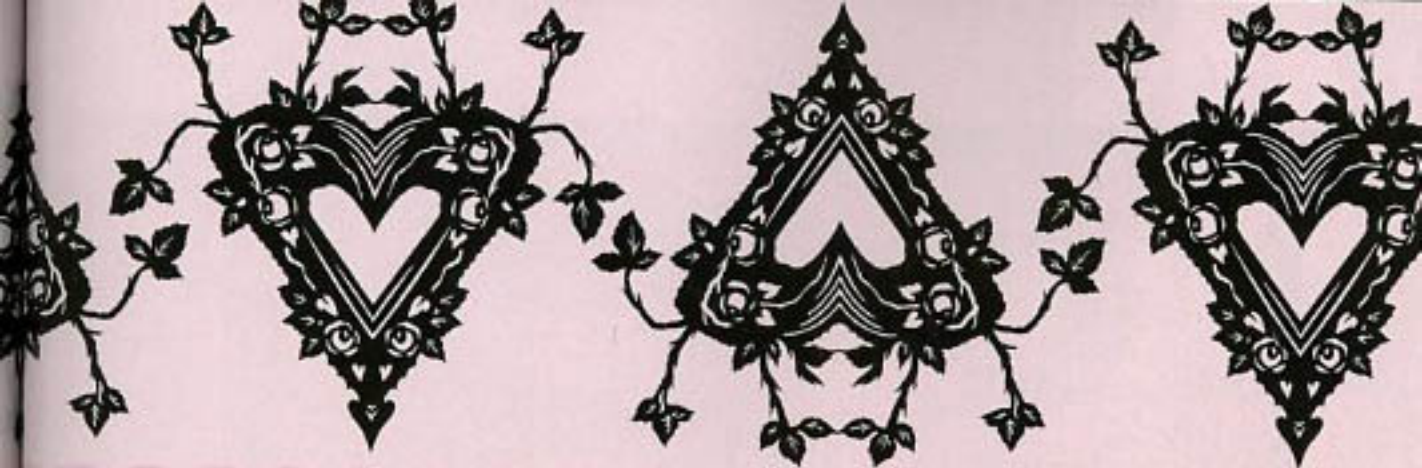
Recently Alexandra has explored the meaning of happiness. In this issue, she shares the unique joy of living and working alongside her husband, Peter Brown.

Sharyn's prowess with tiny scissors and paper will astonish you as she creates a myriad of enchanting images. You'll read her fairytale story with pleasure.

Your countless calls, emails, letters, and love notes have made our past few weeks most enjoyable. Thank you for welcoming back Victoria.

Shelley Foster Hoffman
Editor-in-Chief





BLISS
Victoria

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

Do you ask what the birds say?

The Sparrow, the Dove,

The Linnet and Thrush say,

"I love and I love!"

...the Lark is so brimful of gladness and love,

The green fields below him, the blue sky above,

That he sings, and he sings;

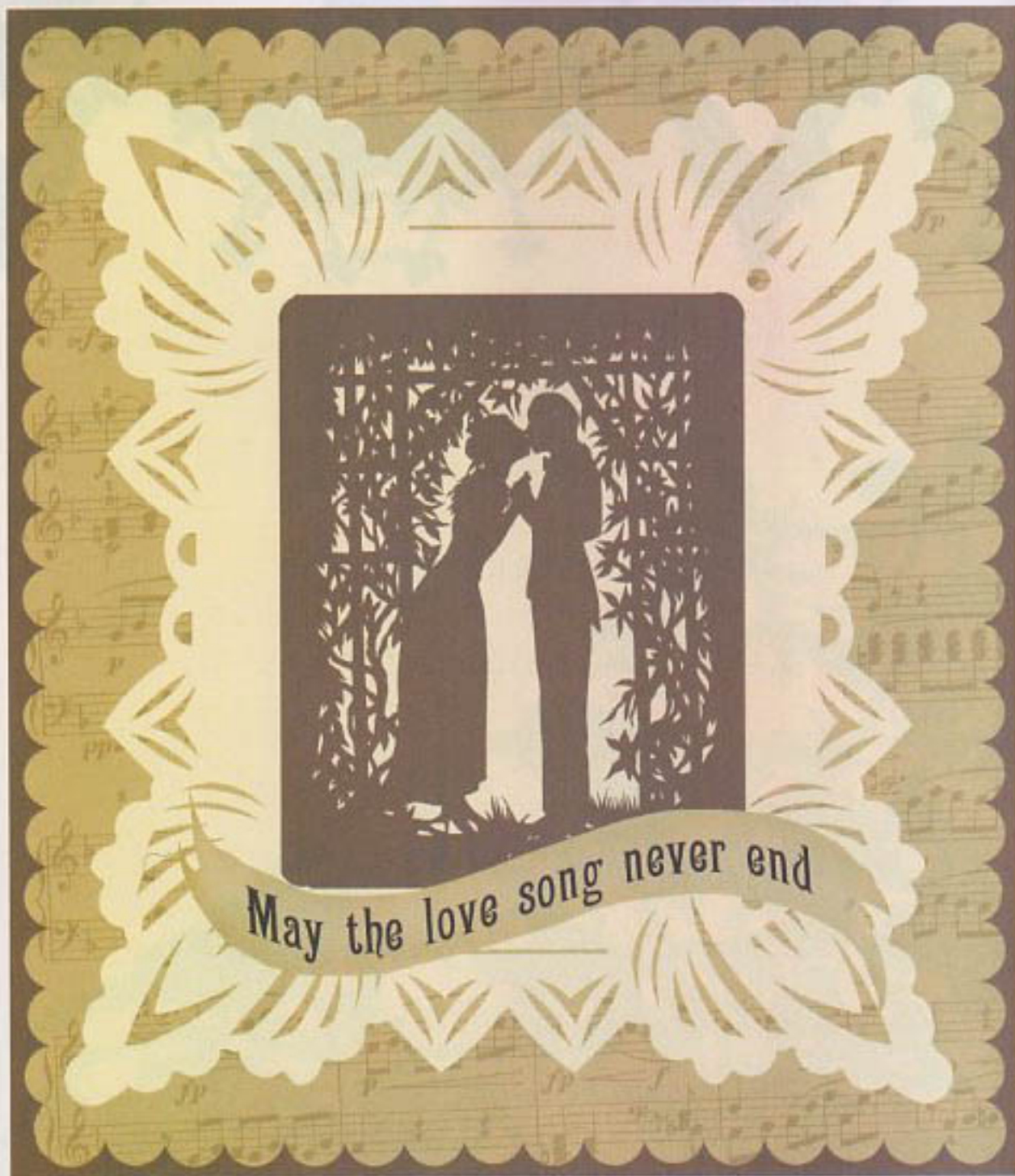
and for ever sings he—

"I love my Love, and my

Love loves me!"

— SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE





PAPER ARTISTRY:

The Inspired Snip of Silhouettes

Paper seems rather mundane until it falls into the skillful hands of Sharyn Sowell. With a clever snip of the scissors, she gives us a world that we long to remember—images of innocent love, playful children, and glimpses of nature.



THE MASTER OF APPELBY



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"I love to create things that combine the old and the new. Sometimes I cut up dog-eared books or sheet music, and my favorite scissors are the ones from my mother she bought at Woolworth's when I was a little girl."

— SHARYN SOWELL

While a sparrow sings sweetly outside her rose-covered cottage, Sharyn Sowell's silver scissors slip in at the chorus. Snip, snip, snippety-snip, she starts to shape and sculpt one of her signature silhouettes.

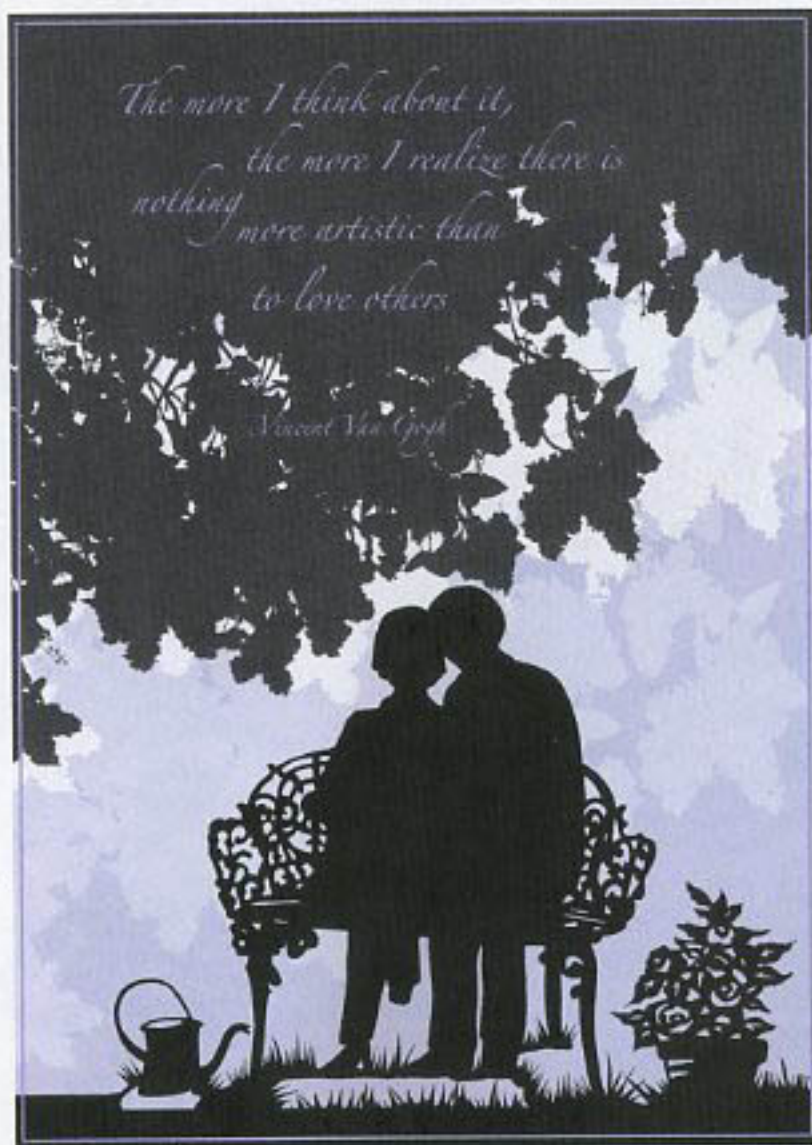
"Real life is the best fairytale," she says as she cradles the plain-paper Victorian valentine in her hand. "When you stop to look at your own life, it's better than the best story ever written."

For Sharyn, the story is all about the little things—the everyday miracles that make daydreams come true. It's the bumblebee as it does its dizzy dance in the daisies. It's the autumn leaves as they fall like red and gold confetti. It's the cute, curly-haired girl gently blowing on a dandelion to scatter its delicate seeds to the wind.

And it's scissors cutting paper. "I love to make something complex out of nothing," she says. "I'm a paper

Sharyn Sowell creates charming harmony—a world filled with children dancing freely, playing musical instruments, and holding hearts amid the beauty of nature's innocent creatures.





cutter, I carry everything I need in my pocket. What is more simple than that?"

Sharyn made her first silhouette two decades ago when her two sons were youngsters. To amuse them during a family vacation, she cut up lunch bags using the scissors of her husband's Swiss Army knife. Now her cutout and calligraphy creations have leapt off the page, appearing on everything from gift bags and china to Christmas stockings and garden flags. "Taking time to marvel—that's what shows up in my work," she says. "This is a huge part of my work, and I want to encourage other people to see the wonders of the world as I do."

To be inspired, she need look no further than Mount Vernon, Washington, and her own backyard cottage-style studio, which her sons made for her. If on a given day, the hollyhocks and foxglove in the English garden don't charm her, she can taste her way along the raspberry hedge, confer with the tiny toad that has taken up residence on her doorstep, or mull things over in the gazebo with her constant companions, Caesar, a beagle mix, and Charlie, a Newfoundland retriever.

Sharyn surveys her studio, where paper scraps sprinkle the floor like salt and pepper. She never knows which will strike her fancy—the potted wild violets playing peek-a-boo, the bird's nest on the windowsill, the photos a friend sent her of a quaint Paris shoe shop.



"When I'm cutting, I lose track of time," she says. "I look up, and hours have gone by. I love to create things that combine the old and the new. Sometimes I cut up dog-eared books or sheet music, and my favorite scissors are the ones from my mother she bought at Woolworth's when I was a little girl."

Suddenly, the sparrow's solo is silenced. Sharyn, scissors in hand, peeks through the doilylike curtains, which she cut from common butcher paper, to see the next chapter of the fairytale she calls real life play out. Smiling as her scissors sing their nip-snip song, she says, "For me, everything is pea sweet."

This artist's work varies richly in design, subject matter, and originality. The miracle begins with solid paper that she snips into delicate shapes, such as a medley of delicate blooms and leaves, images of schoolchildren skipping, a young couple cuddling on a bench, and works of art combining playful sheaves of music. A vintage suitcase holds printing plates made from Sharyn's original artwork.



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