

# The Milford-Haven Novels

A Journey into the Heart of Mara Purl's Women's Fiction Writing

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**My Heart Goes Red for Women** Posted by: [MaraPurl](#) / Sept. 14, 2012



To be worthwhile, a story must be well thought out. It must have compelling characters who have something at stake, dramatic structure with plenty of tension and intriguing plot twists. Yet, even with all this, a story—be it an essay or short story, an anecdote or a novel—won't stick with us or be worth sharing unless it has something else. That something is heart—a deceptively small word that actually encompasses a vital core of meaning. "Core" is, in fact, synonymous with "heart," as shown by the French word for heart, "coeur." So we use expressions like "the heart of the matter" when we're describing that which is essential. As I've learned from many

years of service to women's causes, there are several things that belong on the "essential" list for women's well-being.

A marvelous moment of core synergy happened a few months ago. Two committed, generous women had volunteered to co-chair a major event for the American Heart Association. One of them, drawn by the wording of my book titles, attended an author event where she heard me speak. Excited, she called her co-chair and they decided I'd be the perfect keynote speaker for their event. What Paula Pollette and Susan Davis didn't know then was it'd been my heart-desire to speak for the AHA for many years.

It was a thrill and an honor to speak today for this group of women in Colorado Springs—hundreds of them, in fact, and each one more beautiful than the next, in dresses and jackets every shade of red. I began by telling a funny story. One day a woman came up to me in town (Colorado Springs being my second home, and the location of my husband's medical practice.) She thanked me for helping me through her pregnancy. When I gave her a blank stare, she said, "Oh you don't have to be modest. I *know* how dedicated you nurses are!" As she walked away, I realized what must've happened. She was undoubtedly one of my husband's patients. On the wall of his office is a photo of me—in costume. As a cast member of *Days of Our Lives* I played Nurse Darla Cook. "I'm not a real nurse . . . but I played on on TV."

After a good laugh, my audience and I settled into my talk, which was filled with "Aha" moments in honor of the A.H.A. I slipped into metaphor-land, as we creative-types are apt to do. Addressing serious health issues are the core message of the AHA. But from my perspective, addressing the *underlying* issues might give us the most dynamic access and the most effective results. Need to get a handle on our cholesterol levels? Well, what might be clogging our feelings? Blood pressure too high? What triggers the most stress in our lives? Not taking enough time to workout? How can we best exercise control over our circumstances?

Looking around the room during my keynote address, there were enough nodding heads and note-taking to demonstrate that "Aha" was happening at every table. And during the morning before I spoke, dedicated doctors and technicians had offered classes and coaching, screenings and recommendations; survivors had told harrowing but inspiring stories of their near-misses. The whole community turned out in record numbers to support this annual event, because it makes a difference to the women in this community. I was so impressed and inspired that I plan to continue working with local chapter Executive Director Dot Teso to create seminars and coaching sessions. And I'll be working with other organizations to do all I can on behalf of women's health.

There's more to a woman than her physicality, yet, that precious physicality is the outcome of her thoughts, feelings, and actions. Even if we take exquisite care of our bodies, sooner or later we must acknowledge those deeper places in ourselves. That's why I always ask my readers: In your heart of hearts, what did you always want to do? Are you doing it yet? If not now, when? And if not here, where? As I said to the Go Red audience today: honor yourself and cherish your heart's desires. Why? Because you're worth it. That's the core of every good story.

For more information on the evolving world of my "heart" novels *What the Heart Knows* and *Where the Heart Lives*, visit my new website [www.MaraPurl.com](http://www.MaraPurl.com) where you can subscribe to my newsletter, follow me on social media, enjoy photos of this and other events, and videos, discover more special offers and more.

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