

One can tell a lot about a person from the books on her bookshelf. In sophomore Dahl Clark's case, one can tell a lot from the novels, stories, and essays on her personal website.

"I began writing in about fourth grade, but it wasn't until tenth grade that I got an Internet connection," she says. "Then I just started putting all of my writings online." The Fayetteville, North Carolina, native now boasts one of the most expansive student-maintained websites on Duke's network. Divided into sections that detail her interests, the site covers such disparate topics as philosophy and environmental science. But the meat of Clark's online presence is "resonance: a stories-and-literature site."

The mainstay of "resonance" is KCSYMCHG or KC Symbol of Change (www.duke.edu/~dbc4/KCSYMCHG/index.html), which Clark describes as "a novel, but not in the traditional, linear sense. It's divided into chunks, but people should be able to read it in any order they want."

Tailored specifically for reading on the Web, it is, in effect, Clark's personal journal, with people from her daily life rendered as recurring fictional characters. The interactions at the core of the novel come from the author's own experiences, and are peppered with fantastic events culled from her study of theoretical physics—particularly string theory and quantum theory.

This novel project has been going on since 1992, when Clark outlined her basic plan. It's now one of several online novels in her repertoire. She adds to the site at a rate of about ten pages every three weeks, and the printed version of her longest novel now totals nearly 200 pages.

Besides writing, Clark has turned to photography as another mode of self-expression. Before starting her freshman year, she purchased a digital camera. "I was looking for a way to convey my thoughts using pictures as well as text," she says, "and computers just have so much more capacity than anything in print." Her site—www.duke.edu/~dbc4



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Electronic atelier: a site for creating journals, novels, and photo works

duke.edu/~dbc4—now features hundreds of photos of the Duke campus. The ease she gained with the camera translated into a deeper curiosity about graphic design, which has played itself out during the past semester.

At the beginning of the academic year, Clark stumbled upon a job doing Web design for the newly established John Hope Franklin Center for International and Interdisciplinary Studies. Her first project was to concoct a site for the Tobacco Project, a series of installations in Perkins Library and at the Duke Homestead by renowned Chinese avant-garde artist Xu Bing. The installations explored the web of money and circumstance that linked the Duke family, cigarette sales, and China at the turn of the century.

The site she created (www.duke.edu/web/cis/tobacco), promoted by the Franklin Center as a teaching tool to secondary-school teachers throughout North Carolina, serves as an interactive alternative to the traditional printed exhibition catalogue. The site documents the creation of the Tobacco Project, with writings and pictures that give context to Xu Bing's artworks, from their earliest inception to the exhibition opening. Once complete, the site will boast exclusive critical essays on the show by internationally recognized scholars. Clark is also hard at work on the main site for the Franklin Center.

But Web design is only her latest computer-related interest. She is a bona-fide technogeek, with four programming languages—C++, Java, JavaScript,

and HTML—firmly under her belt. This, like many of her interests, began to develop during her two years at the North Carolina School for Science and Mathematics, a magnet boarding school in Durham that draws some of the state's best students.

When it came time to choose a college, Clark applied to only Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill. During her senior year, she was named one of Duke's Reginald Howard Scholars, earning a full-tuition academic merit scholarship that recognizes promising African-American students.

Even after three semesters at Duke, she is still active at Science and Math. She has worked in technical support there during the past two summers and continues to volunteer at the school every Sunday afternoon. "That's really where I started to grow, and I enjoy giving back to that community."

A physics-turned-biology major, Clark has had a few professional laboratory stints. She says she's looking forward to the summer as a chance to work in a biology lab or with an environmental defense organization. While she loves her writing and Web-design pursuits, she sees herself headed ultimately for scientific research.

"You give the world something new," she muses, "and lots of people scramble around trying to make sense of it. That's what I need to be doing."

—Philip Tinari '01