

Dechi Palmo

by [Brian Doyle](#) in the [January 25, 2011](#) issue

Discovered a few moments ago that my sister, my sole sister,
The sister I have admired for more than fifty years, the sister
Who rocked my cradle with her toe as she did her homework,
The sister who was never especially leery of punching us out
When she felt we deserved it which I have to say yes we did,
This sister has a name I never ever heard before this morning.
Dechi Palmo she is called in the Tibetan Buddhist monastery
She graces. *Depa for short*, she says cheerfully, on the phone.
I know where that phone is, the only one in all the monastery.
It's hanging on the wall outside the kitchen where she works,
When she is not teaching, or praying, or meditating, or every
One of the thousand other tasks she does silently and smiling.
It means Happiness Glorious Woman, she says, or Happiness
Glorious She Who Meditates. I nearly faint with seething joy.
Sometimes, not all that often, but more than we maybe admit,
Things line up exactly right, all hilarious and wild and bright,
And you see a thing just as it really is, deep in its holy bones.
You think that's never going to happen again but then it does.
You can't command it, you can't make it stay, you cannot do
Much of anything except slouch there grinning and mystified,
It turns out, but to be occasionally grinning and mystified, ah!