

From **Can't Live Without You** by Philip Middleton Williams
(pmw@barkbarkwoofwoof.com)

Donny Hollenbeck, male, mid-thirties, is a writer who makes his living writing romance novels but really wants to write the Great American Novel. Here he is explaining why he writes trash.

I was down to my last hundred bucks. I hadn't sold an article in two weeks. I was scrounging through the aisles of this little *bodega* on Bleecker Street for my weekly supply of Top Ramen when I come across this collection of romance novels with these impossibly syrupy characters written in this appallingly bad style, all written by someone with a name like Heather Golden and Sylvia Frothington. So, I figure, what the hell...maybe I can crank out one of these. A week later, I have a hundred pages of this incredibly cloying crap, using every cliché known to man...we're talking heaving breasts and husky voices, throbbing manhoods and bulging biceps. I used my last stamp to mail it to the publisher just for the hell of it. Three days later I get a phone call. They want it. Two days later, Barbara Solomon, the literary agent who wouldn't return my phone calls a month before is suddenly trying to take me to lunch. And there you have it. Another great literary career is on its way.