

Why Write?

By Carl Nelson

Currently, as publisher of Magic Bean Books, I have finally convinced my friend Marty to publish a book of his own stories and poems. He says he doesn't care if they don't sell or are even popular. But he would like them assembled and available in book form. This benchmark decision on his part has taken me numerous literary luncheons to accomplish.

"Always remember, you don't know what you're talking about. You think you know what you're talking about."

Writer's note

That's what I've called our beer joint meetings in playful retrospect. Actually, we're just two friends who meet regularly for lunch, who share an interest in poetry and literature, and to whom I've mentioned from time to time that Marty ought to assemble a collection of his favorites.

I think what might finally have brought him over to my side of the issue, was in observing me publish book after book without making any splash whatsoever. The sales figures attest – the water is safe! There is no way notoriety will find him.

"And there's no way you're gonna get sued – unless you've made a lot of money! What's not to like?"

– Writer's note

"Magic Bean Books' writers have all "traveled widely in

Concord". And with our books, you can too." "Take the back road for books to read." For: "Authors that will grow on you overnight." This is all that we promise... not necessarily meteoric sales.

I've often told Marty that I feel fairly safe in publishing whatever I write, as nobody around here reads anyway. It's like that scene in Jurassic Park where Nedray (the computer programmer) meets with his buyer for stolen dinosaur eggs at a table in the local cantina of San Juan, Costa Rica. Nedry waves down Dodgson, his nervous buyer wearing sunglasses and a straw hat with the bag full of money.

"You shouldn't use my name," Dodgson says, sotto voce.

Nedray points him out to everyone. "Dodgson! We have Dodgson here!"

Nobody responds.

"Nobody cares," Nedray states. "Nice hat. What're you trying to look like, a secret agent?"

– Jurassic Park, the movie



Folks hereabouts would have to be told that something I wrote specifically targeted them, in order to pique any interest – or made slanderous accusations about someone they know. And then someone would have had to go to the trouble to place it right in front of their nose. And even given all of this – they would have much rather just heard what someone said who had purportedly read the article. Conversation is so much easier than reading. Plus, you get those embellishments that all good gossip provides.

Really, I think what finally came across to my friend Marty is that there is a pleasure in assembling a collection of one's thoughts, especially towards the end of one's life, even when there is no audience for it. None of us is really anything in the cosmos. Nevertheless, even dark matter, I would suppose, would like a note made of its existence. (After all, it makes up 95% of the Universe!) And plus, if there is any note to be made – it should be done well. And, if you want to be sure something is done correctly, it's best to do it yourself. Marty surely recognized this. Best not to leave your drinking buddy to define you! Ha, ha.

Plus there is a joy to be had just in the activity of best addressing one's thoughts. Getting words right and possibly to even sing (or perhaps just hum a bit...) is enjoyable. To wander down to the furthest end of deep cave and make your drawings on the wall – is not really the best marketing tactic. But that resolute caveman surely created some pleasure for himself (herself?) in recording just what that buffalo looked like when being speared by that lance.

It could be that the cave individual was just trying to get away from his/her mate, kids, weeding duty, or the clan – in – law, and began drawing on the wall while resting there, as a way of enduring the moment and of passing the time. And what a eternity has passed! And what a cause celebre' initiated!

What's the controversy initiated, you ask?

Well... whether you exist! Or even existed, for goodness sakes!

(We're talking The Basic Existential Act here, people. That's what Magic Bean Books peddles – right up to your door.)

So, I tell my friend Marty, "Think of yourself – ourselves, if you wish – scratching on the wall of our quite constrained existence... And we're way, way, way down to the very end of the cave. No one to bother us. No one to see... but, perhaps eternity! It's a thrill, isn't it? (I shook him by the shoulders.) And signed him up.

Another author for the Magic Bean Book stable:

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