

Interview with Michael Holme *

Q. So Michael why do you write poetry.

A. I don't know really. I just have to.

Q. Who is your poetry for?

A. I don't know really. Well it's probably for me if I'm honest, or Michelle.

Q. So why go to the length of publishing your collection?

A. Well it stands up on the shelf. Papers just fall off and notebooks aren't much better. Laptop and tablet are all very fine but a book can show you a better time.

Q. I've heard that phrase somewhere before. Who would you say your influences are?

A. You mean my poetic influences? My dogs have influenced my poems. So have my relationships. Particularly with myself. That's not what you meant is it?

Q. Favourite poets?

A. I'd love to say I'd never heard of John Cooper Clark and if anything I write or read sounds like him, then he must have copied me. But it's a fib.

Q. That's seems pretty clear on your audio site where you read all your poems in this collection. Have you ever read Jacques Prevert?

A. Who?

Q. You stress that your work is "performance" poetry'. You obviously didn't go to RADA. Or am I wrong?

A. No I've just picked it up. I hope that what I lack in style is made up for in clarity. I'm very particular about my words. They're not just there to be thrown away.

Q. You have some interesting turns of phrase. Is your poetry literature or just a series of therapeutic diary entries? A shorthand way of capturing the tales that might make up an autobiography some day? You do subtitle your work, "My beautiful diary". I have to say your "Recollections of the 'Djemma el Fna' 1989" is a lovely piece of travel writing quite different from most of the collection.

A. That's one way of looking at it. It's a bit like making short films with words. Poetry is condensed reality. It doesn't have to excuse itself. It doesn't have to have a beginning, a middle and an end. It doesn't have to satisfy the readers need for completion. It doesn't have to stick to form.

Q. That's interesting because in a few poems you do cling to a rhyming structure, which if I may say so doesn't necessarily add to the content or meaning. Don't you think no rhyme is better than forced rhyme?

A. Maybe. For the most part they write themselves, some are born rhymed, some are born blank. I seldom thrust rhymeness or non-rhymeness upon any of them.

Q. Your book title "As the mood takes me" suggests your relationship with life is a little capricious. It could also suggest that you have little control over your writing. Do your moods govern your poetic output or can you put them to one side?

A. I could say my moods are me; they're not separate from me. On the other hand over time my relationship to my moods has changed. I now realise they are fickle. Good or bad, they won't last for long. I can manage that. So in a sense they are separate from me.

Q. So, given that you are quite open about your personal voyage through bi-polarity and personal trauma, is your poetry therapeutic? Has it been cathartic?

A. I doubt it. It has let me show off though. There's a part of me that needs to perform. I could do it through music but it seems a lot easier through words. A poem like "The story of my life" is obviously a retrospective, a reflection, a summation.

Q. Your pen name is Glenn Evans. A hybrid drawn from two of your musical heroes, Glenn Gould and Gil Evans, both pianists and composers, both from Toronto, both associated with the avant-garde, both masters of their craft and ground breaking artists. Would you rather be an accomplished pianist or an accomplished poet?

A. As far as I'm concerned I'm both. Poetry is easier to carry around. I had no formal grounding in either. I've taught myself both (with some assistance). We have to, or should I say we can do if we wish, make the best of what we've got. I've got me, and Michelle, and Angel, and I'm trying to make the best of it.

Q. As the mood takes you?

A. Not quite. As I said before, I'm on far more intimate terms with my moods now and I try not to take any crap from them. We try to make each day a good day in some way. We've had enough of the others. I must be strong, I'm still here.

Dave Morgan

*The author wishes to stress that Michael Holme took no part in this interview so it is strictly a work of fiction.