

innerVIEWS

Billy Michael Haynes

WORDSMITHING

“What a boon to be able to say on a gray winter day, “Why do anything, anyway? I’ll read awhile and write a letter. What’s my pleasure? I’ll lean and loaf and invite my ease. I’ll make hot tea and join the dogs in reverie, a country jaunt. What more need be?”

Where went my ambition?

Fired from a job at the Toys R Us DC, it’s taken some time to get past the debris and devastation of no more paychecks from the corporation, the ‘this-for-that’ trade-off of measured time and tallied quotas routinely exchanged for bucks, the “ritual de lo habitual” of getting and spending meeting the cost of living. The meter is always running. God’s curse is as old as sin.

“Every time you get a paycheck you win,” says Aunt Mary Ann, true as blue crosses and they spent a hundred grand putting me back together again in a hospital where it’s cheaper to die.

I couldn’t pay the rest for the broken neck and busted chest, the fractured skull and deafened ear, a year depressed. They screwed a halo on my head and said that I’d been blessed I wasn’t dead. I didn’t think I’d make it. I guess I passed the litmus test. I’m sure I couldn’t fake it.

Nowadays I’ve no agenda to keep or schedule to meet having severed the corporate knot and taken the leap. I’m retired with no quotas to hit; no hundred percent and no more nagging bosses.

Some days there’s not even a breeze for an idea to be blowing in or a philosopher’s bone to chew on. Some days are adrift in a crystal wind. Some days slip away with nothing to say.

But I will write today and everyday hence. I will turn the phrase until it makes sense. I will bend the words to make them fit. Like Walt Whitman I will shout, “It is in me and must out!”

Sentences, paragraphs, revisions, redrafts, I will be curious and scribe. I will critique and criticize. I will journalize, poetize; write blank verse and rhyme. I will story tell in reams of rondel. I will write all the time.

I will initiate work, engage conversation, do interviews and seek publication. When I have nothing to say, I will write anyway. I will edit and organize getting ready to write. I will send emails and letters to an audience of one. I will validate and be validated and write on-the-run.

I will create folders and files, have irons in the fire, digitize, prioritize, a writer for hire. I will write from the heart and finish what I start with no thought of reward.

I will rummage through journals I kept in my youth. I will finish a screenplay that stretches the truth. I will go through trunks of unfinished drafts, memoirs, vignettes, old photographs. If a picture says a thousand words, I’ve got five million to rehearse, waiting in the wings.

I will journey through the residue of boxed-up family trees and histories with mysteries of crazy life. Are there stories to be told that might spin into gold? Now that there’s time, what might I find by gazing long and long into the faded faces of people who have gone? I will read the fragile letters of spirits having flown. Was their fleeting there-ness integro with my own?

I will carry on. I will live by my wits while my spirit is strong and my body still fit. I will not procrastinate or wait any longer until it’s too late. I will follow my voice.

I will celebrate a gray day for the miracle it is in a warm home in winter with food on the stove and blankets on beds. I will celebrate gray days in long country walks with wonderful dogs that drink from the ponds across pastures of straw.



THE CURIOUS ANGLE RANCH ROUTE 3 BOX 143 WAXAHACHIE, TX 75165 (214)937-7533

Celebrations for gray days...

