

Today the Belgian poet Germain Droogenbroodt gives you suggestions on creative writing poetry as an art by words. All arts are created with a motive and object of the artist and the work is completed going through the process.

However it is not the goal. The works are received by readers and observers and given new life to grow. Today he will answer to our questions, and we will know the secret of his creative writing.

Q1 What was the opportunity you have begun to create poems?

As a young boy, at the primary school we had to memorize poetry. The teachers generally did not know much about modern, contemporary poetry, so the poems we had to memorize – I still remember some verses – were from the most famous Flemish romantic poet Guido Gezelle (1830-1899), a priest. Poetry in rhyme, very musical. It sounded nice. It fascinated me. In fact, Gezelle is the only poet writing in Dutch (one of the official languages in Belgium *) from whom I learned in poetry: the musicality of his poetry. Contrary to for example Italian, which I regard as the world's most musical language, Dutch is not at all a musical language, although Flemish* pronounce it smoother than Dutch. But the poet should be a master and creator of his language. So using alliterations one can – as you might have noticed in my recital - obtain some musicality even in Dutch.

As a young boy I started to write short stories and rhymed poems. Of course, they were not good and fortunately, they have not been saved. As an adolescent, I was very curious to “discover” foreign countries. Hardly 14 years old, with a 15-year-old friend, we drove with our bicycles to Holland and Germany. I discovered the need of studying foreign languages in order to be able to talk with foreign people and... to read their books. Later, studying in Brussels, I became a member of the German, the French and the British libraries and was especially fascinated by German romantic poems. Especially by their love poetry. I started to write – in German – rhymed poems for my Flemish girlfriend who did not understand a word of it. But they sounded nice. And as a Dutch poet wrote, since my girlfriend was an easy and enthusiast audience, I felt to be a poet in the deepest of my thoughts. Since discovering foreign poetry, my interest for poetry never has left me anymore. It is a way of thinking, a way of living.

Q2 What is the motive power you can keep writing?

Like painters, composers, musicians etc. I think that one does not become a poet, but one is born a poet. But like a talented musician has to exercise many hours a day, so should the poet exercise his language and become a master of it. Due to circumstances or experiences in their lives some poets start and keep writing, others give up. As to myself, I write very irregularly. But I read a lot. I have to read to feel satisfied. As Confucius also pretended, I will be a student all my

live. Some of the books, especially poetry and philosophical works, inspire me. They bring me ideas which, at a certain moment, I need to express in poetry. But also things that happen inspire me, as well as nature.

Having moved from West Germany to East Germany, at that time under communist rule, a famous critic asked Reiner Kunze, to send him new manuscripts, pretending that it was the “appropriate “time to do so. Kunze replied with a poem:

The appropriate time comes from inside

**The appropriate time is, when the seeds
have become nicely black
And that knows first of all
the tree.**

But since many years, and that is also the reason why I translate and publish poetry, with my poems, I wish to offer a little piece of beauty, sometimes solace, to those who need it and thus to give sense to my life.

Q3 What was the theme mainly?

Nature has always played an important role in my poetry, because it is also a symbol of life. Like a flower it grows, blossoms, dies and, if you believe in it, resurrects. But I wrote also a number of love poems and two collections about death, homage to deceased poets.

Q4 Was it changing?

The elements nature, love and death are still present in my poetry, but since *The Road* (read *DAO*), my 5th poetry book, my poetry has become more philosophical, more mystical. *The Road* is a kind of poetic bridge between Western, especially of the ancient Greek, and Eastern cultures and philosophies. It was the result of visiting many times the Far East and having studied Asian philosophies and religions.

Q5 Do you compose a poems for yourself, for someone in the world.

My favourite poet, Paul Celan wrote “Reality does not exist. Reality has to be searched for and found“. The same stands for the poetic reality. Or, as the Spanish poet José Ángel Valente pretended “To write is not reproducing a formerly experienced existence, but **re**producing it”.

The poem itself is the creating process and – once it has been written – it can be a new

perception, a new reality. So part of my poetry is written for myself, to reach a new reality, more insight. But as I mentioned before, I also write to do something, however little, to offer some beauty to my readers and sometimes as well to a particular person.

Q6 Do you think poetry has a power to change the mass or the world?

No unfortunately, although some poets wrote revolutionary poetry, they did not change the world, not even their country. As we see, the masses are lead – or better say mislead – by political demagogues. Poetry is for a minority, for a minority which nowadays, even less than before, finds satisfaction away from the universal brainwashing made by the omnipotent powers. For that minority good music, art in general and poetry always have been real values, life buoys for some people.

Q7 Let us know the secret of your poetry writing.

My poetry is very different from what other Belgian or even European poets write. One of the reasons is that I studied languages, allowing me to read plenty of foreign poetry in their original languages. At the age of 17 I already read world famous the German classics, such as Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin and Rilke as well as the French Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud etc. So instead of being influenced by local Flemish or Dutch poets, which hardly have been translated in other languages, from my first book on my poetry was different and influenced by important foreign poets. My two first books were mainly influenced by German nature poetry. Later I not only read poetry from all over the world, but also philosophical works, fascinated by Taoism, ZEN Buddhism, Confucianism, Sufi which greatly influenced my poetry. As friends and critics say about my poetry it is apparently simple, but at the same time, it generally has a deep meaning. I think this is the secret, to write poems, which at the first reading already fascinate by the understandable but original poetic composition of words, and at the same time leave a philosophical flavor, which induces the reader to read the poem again and to discover in it more than what the apparently simple verses hide.

Q8 Do you think there is good poetry and failed poetry?

Many amateurs or would be poets never have read a book of good poetry. Since they do not know what poetry is, they cannot write poetry. Therefore, one should only call good poetry **poetry**. Contrary to novelist, which sometimes write a good, sometimes write a failed book.