



An Interview – 2.9.2012.:



Sam yada CANNAROZZI

DVR: On their way, some people are in search of truth, some look for answers as to the transience and pain thereof, some are in stubborn search of their own path through thought, and some know from the beginning of their search, they are on their right way indeed, just working and learning more, giving more as a mature and complete person. Rare they are, unfortunately. Feeling comfortable with what they are doing,

feeling good with what they are giving to this world. Rich and full of life and love, they are. It seems to me you are among them, Sam. Was the growth and search for/of Sam Cannarozzi a painful one?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: Personally it was my first trip to Europe for my studies 1971-1972 that opened my eyes to an adult life (although I vigorously old on to some of

my childhood innocence). I believe I had an excellent education, but as with all influence, you have to adapt it and even undo part of it.

I went from the academic to the artistic. That was an exciting step, not totally without uncertainties. In looking back I would say I have been extremely fortunate, but I have also worked hard to be able to pursue my true desires. And have a family too. All in all, I have escaped any great pain until now and am grateful for this. I try to be open to other people's less fortunate existence.

DVR: I cannot not to ask you, you seem to have Croatian roots, as well, don't you. I remember we were in correspondence about it, some time ago? Was your grandmother from Dalmatia? Have you been to Croatia, did you visit her birthplace, Adriatic??

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: Yes I definitely have Croatian roots on my mother's side of the family. Her name was Katica Kragic and my grandmother Nada Roje. I have only

visited Split once before the war, where my grandparents were born, but it was truly memorable ! My mother and her sister, my aunt, Marica came. I still have a large family there.

DVR: Being a performer, the story teller, may look simple and interesting, but it's not that easy and simple. It takes much of work, doesn't it?

How was it in the beginning of your story telling carrier?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: I have been professionel storyteller for 30 years. I have 8 years

training in theater, some dance and other stage arts that dates back to the mid 1970?s. I also have a university diploma in modern languages and linguistics.

Then in 1982 I was invited to an international storytelling festival in western France. I shared the stage with traditional tellers from Sicily, Tunisia, Rajhistan and Egypt. And I realized the art form I was looking for is the intimate art of storytelling based on the living word.

DVR: To be able to perform in front of people and bring them your own work, trying to open some door to their thoughts, to wake up the riches of their inner worlds, to help them find their own way to pacification with the pains of living world? once you were very young, did you have any idea what is it you will be doing?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: At first I thought to become a language teacher. But after having

studied in France as part of my university degree, I was introduced to theater. From that moment on I knew I wanted to do something with audiences. And theater eventually transformed itself into storytelling for me.

DVR: To love what you are doing, unfortunately, in this modern age has become a rare luck. Sometimes man or woman has to be in search throughout years. After graduation of modern languages and linguistics, you kept on learning, searching? Was it curiosity driving you into all the wonderful things you are doing? Or?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: My philosophy is to be curious until the end of one's life. The great Leonardo DaVinci said "I'm sixty years old and still learning"!
And

when I look at my career, my formal training in languages was well utilized in theater, especially in storytelling. And all that time I have also been writing poetry, in many styles and over the past twenty years a lot of haiku.

DVR: Your stories, where do you collect ideas, where do they start in reality? Is only a flicker, a spark enough to start research and another work, or ?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: Stories are everywhere! I am always reading stories from all over the world. Most of my repertory is composed of wonder and fairy tales. I

have 12 hours of stories in repertory and am always adding new ones.

It is also very important for me the way one tells stories. So of course I use the spoken word, but also gesture, some music and rhythm, objects and I also employ origami (Japanese paper folding) for example in my performances.

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: Sensitivity to different cultures, meeting so many different people, travelling? What is your opinion, are we going to be able to preserve

ourselves as Human, should I say more humane beings? Our cradle ? our Planet? Is there enough of love and respect for our beautiful cradle left in the minds and hearts of people? Are you optimistic?



It is an immense joy as well as an important undertaking to tell and share my stories with many different peoples. More than a dozen European countries have invited me as well as many countries in West, French-speaking Africa.

I can only say that I hope through this kind of sharing and contact, people can see that we do indeed live on an interconnected planet, that we need each other and that we can appreciate each other culturally and socially. We MUST be optimistic !!!

DVR: Haiku. From mid seventies to nowadays? Once in love with haiku, in love forever? Where/how did you come in touch with haiku? Haiku is at home in the USA for a century now, I suppose it was easier to discover it there than in some other parts of the world. Here in Croatia, we had first haiku published during early sixties, and our first haiku magazine was published in 1977.

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: The very first contact I had with haiku was when I was 9 years old in school in Chicago, USA. (By the way I grew up in the Sicilian and Yugoslavian neighborhoods of the city. And even today, there are many

families with roots from Croatia and Serbia living there.)

I began writing haiku in the United States, but as with my vocation and career in theater and storytelling, it was in France that I really began to write and publish my haiku here in Europe but also in Japan, Canada, New Zealand etc.

DVR: Haiku goes through significant changes, not only these years, it changes constantly, just like everything else does, on his way through new times, different ways of life, different cultures and many languages. As the poets mature and their understanding of life changes, as well. Yet, some haikins although being born in the West, seem to be born with haiku in their veins, their very first poems are haiku indeed. And different styles, the crossroad of haiku poetry and many other problems concerning haiku do not touch them at all. Is it possible haiku is something we all carry deep within our beings, yet rarely man has a courage to bring it up? Or is it the Western culture which has done changes upon its people past centuries? you know, the technological development that has not much in common with logic of living humans had for millenniums.

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: It would be nice to believe that at least each human being has a poetical inspiration, even small, in his or her soul. But often it is not encouraged or developed. In regards specifically to haiku, the short, concise form, in the West I think this became the proverb. In regards to a philosophical reflexion, that of course is universal. But I think that the East and West world approach is quite different. Although of course in each culture, individuals may have innate tendencies for other cultures.

DVR: Haiku is at home throughout the world by now. But, some authors manage to stay faithful to the traditional Japanese haiku, or they write haiku the closest to the great haiku of past centuries in Japan. Your haiku seem to keep the shine of those great times.

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: By choice and discipline I have chosen to keep close to the traditional haiku inspiration and form - the 'haiku moment' usually noted immediately (more rarely corrected afterwards), 17 syllables with a reference to nature/kigo, not always a cutting word but often a surprise realization. I write haiku and senryu indifferently.

DVR: There are opinions that haiku has become too widely exposed, there are too many poems called haiku and not much of really good haiku. Do you agree? If so, is it possible to heal the situation, and how?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI: As is the case with so many human endeavors and in particular with art the initial genius becomes diluted in part when generalized. Haiku is no

exception. In reading many journals and publications I can see this in the form of simple imitation or thoughts presented as haiku.

There are even website of haiku jokes and the like that I find degrading.

My personal reaction is to simply write as best one can. I am not one who hands out moral criticisms. In occasional haiku workshops, kukai etc I try to be positive and encouraging with participants who are interested by the philosophy of haiku. That is the best we can do.

DVR: Who is your favourite haikai? Is there haiku you appreciate more than others? Which one is it, and what does it bring to you?

Sam yada CANNAROZZI

Issa was introduced to me very early in my poetical writings in general. He is so gentle, direct, compassionate and true. And his whole life as he lived it was a reflexion of what he believed.

I think of his haiku

oh, no! don't swat it
the fly is wringing his hands and
praying with hind legs

There is also the end to an Inuit/Eskimo story about someone wanting to hit a mosquito. But when the mosquito answers "Who will take care of my grandchildren?" the person exclaims (I have rewritten this in haiku form)

-

though hard to believe
already a grandfather
tiny mosquito

DVR: Please give us ten of your haiku ...



HAIKU BY Sam yada CANNAROZZI

doors always open
yet his knocking never ceases
the woodpecker

if you wait for it
or if you don't wait for it
the moon will come up

evening fireworks
all the sparks fall except one
first star in the sky

listening to thunder
crows perched high up in the trees
adjust their cawing

hoping to catch something
a spider stretches its web
over a mirror

the cow's bells even
when rung all day long cannot
chase the fog away

all the passing stars
were caught in the tree branches
chilly spring evening

a swan in the rain
all ruffled in the downpour
her sabi intact

a lone empty bench
memories rains wash away
and the bus is late

the nude magnolia
scents and blossoms are long gone
yet grass remembers

DVR

Thank you dear Sam, stay tuned to *Diogen pro cultura magazine...*

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