

Q and A

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en=raptur=ed [riverrun] & mingle

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1. What are the context and background of this collection of poems?

Around the time of beginning this collection, I had discovered the almost completely forgotten modernist, extremely experimental writer Abraham Lincoln Gillespie whose brief output is fascinatingly complex and idiosyncratic. His work reminded me of an early version of the German writer Arno Schmidt and I began thinking of their innovations and unique forms quite a bit, which led me to thinking more and more about ways to break apart words, syntax, and punctuation, while also thinking about the sound and components of language, what Schmidt called Etyme (etyms), which these poems in no way approach but the concept sparked an interest in experimenting with the continual breakdown of words and syntax within the confines of these individual poems. This collection is a series of explorations, deconstructions, and rearrangements.

2. What are some elements of your writing process that were involved in its creation?

en=raptur=ed [riverrun] & mingle began with the construction of the title poem, which was created through the cannibalization of words and phrases from old, unpublished work of mine. I often create pieces, especially longer work, this way, attempting to reuse parts of older writing that, for whatever reason, never worked or I never used and try to transform into something new, different, and hopefully more successful. This process helps me to focus more on the form and (de)construction because the words already exist, leaving me freer to play around and reorient and recompose and breakdown the composite parts thus creating a dramatically new work. The title piece created the stylistic template for where the collection would go and also inspired me to want to further explore many of the experiments and explorations that were created in the title piece, though most of the other poems were written from scratch and not cannibalized in the same way, I was still seeking to continually dissect language, sound, punctuation, and juxtaposition of all of these elements within individual poems.

3. What approach informed your revising of this work and readying it for publication?

Since these poems are so highly and specifically constructed at the time of composition, the main approach to revision is to carefully read through each poem ensuring that all the many constituent elements and experiments are not only in the correct place but also that the phrasing, capitalizations, and other non-conforming elements in the text are correctly

rendered. This can be a tad difficult because I can in no way rely on spell check or other proofing tools because nearly every word in the text appears to be misspelled due to the abnormalities and interruptions used. The main concern is to make sure the “errors” that appear in the text are the correct “errors” so to speak and that all of the idiosyncratic stylistic choices make sense to me and within the context of the poem itself. Otherwise, very little revision takes place.

4. What are some of the key traits that distinguish this collection of poems from your previous writings?

One key trait to this collection is that they are all completely previously unpublished and have never been separated from the whole. Every piece in this book was composed only for inclusion within this book itself. I wanted them to all speak to and fit together as a whole work, being something other than merely a collection of individual poems. *en=raptur=ed [riverrun] & mingle* should be read as a whole, continuous piece of writing, separated out into individual poems or, in a way, sections but, nevertheless, a complete work in and of itself. Additionally, I think this book, along with another chapbook that was composed around the same time, *punctuated avalanche* (Stone Corpse Press) was a turning point toward a new, specific stylistic form that has pushed my work into different and very exciting directions that I’ve continued to explore in different ways, pushing it further and further.

5. What do you hope to see resonate with readers in this poetry collection?

I would like people to see the playfulness and exploratory nature of these pieces. They are attempts at fragmentation, deconstruction, and juxtaposition. There is no need to get too bogged down in the reading of the texts, but to instead simply let the words swirl and move in their own obtuse and eccentric way. The book is meant to be fun because I had fun writing it and I believe extreme experimental writing doesn’t need to be viewed as a job or a chore or a labor but can be enjoyed for their ludic qualities. There is a lot here but not everything has to be completely understood to enjoy. Sometimes not knowing can be more interesting than knowing. There is joy in the experimentation and the explorations.