

Shadows of pain

I remember walking barefoot through wet grass and how its first chill felt like a shadow of pain from fractured memories and how each blade of grass seemed to sharpen the shadow's point till it broke through the skin of resistance to reveal the distance of time a river of rain and the shadows of not knowing why I was walking barefoot through wet grass Perhaps I was hoping for a rainbow

Martin Shone

Quotes from Martin's book Silence Happens: Little Thoughts of Life, Nature, Peace, Freedom & Love

- Silence happens, because the Earth needs to breathe
- Skin talks in colour, when it should talk in love
- Poetry doesn't have to be words, poetry can be your dreams, your memories, your future. Poetry lives within your soul. Poetry is you
- See the ant, how small are we to believe we are any bigger than the ant

Quotes from Martin's upcoming book Being Human: Little Thoughts of Life, Nature, Peace, Freedom & Love

- Perhaps the trees are really the humans and we their seeds or maybe the reason we are here is to practise being human
- Between two souls yet to be found, is the song of one love yet to be sung
- If a butterfly can change the weather, then our smiles can change the world
- Intelligence is born of the oak, the seeds of it are everywhere. They simply need to be planted in the minds of the young



“It's almost like, if I don't write, I'll explode. I do love it, so I'm always writing things down”

Can we have a word with you?

Becoming a published writer is a dream that many wish to achieve but never quite realise. But that doesn't mean it's impossible, as these authors are proving.

Weekend has found two wordsmiths who have found ways to share their work with the world; self-publishing their stories and poems.

Anita Williams is about to embark on a new career



pursuing her childhood dream while Martin Shone is balancing his hobby with his job as a full-time cleaner.

They are both passionate and creative, and tell us how they achieved their publishing aspirations.

Kirsty Bosley

● The Express & Star features readers' short stories and poems every Saturday. If you'd like to see your own work in print, email lisa.williams@expressandstar.co.uk for more information

MARTIN SHONE HE'S GOT THE WRITE STUFF

Martin Shone has two very different sides. In the evening he's a writer, sharing his poetry and stories with the world. But during the day he's more likely to be seen with a mop in his hand than a pen.

The 54-year-old is a full time cleaner at Tettenhall School in Wolverhampton, and has been scrubbing toilets and cleaning floors for 13 years.

But when he gets home and washes away the day, he gets to work self-publishing his written work. We catch him after a shift at the school, and find out how he became a writer.

"I've been writing since 2011. I just wanted to get my work out there so I created a blog and shared my work there. It's a release, somewhere that I can share my feelings and emotions and write about nature, spirit, soul, romance and passion."

"My first book, Silence Happens, I published myself through the website Lulu in 2013.

There are about 50 little phrases in the book, I've got about 500 of the things at home! I compiled them and tried to get it published but it's so difficult. That's why I started self-publishing. Now it's available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble and my second is ready to be published.

Army

"I write short stories too, and I've been working on a novel about bullying. It's a young adult novel which has had good reviews, particularly from some of the Tettenhall College students who read it. I wrote it back in 1999. Work's work, but I have written a poem about cleaning too."

"It's nice because a lot of my poetry has gone up a level over the last year or so. I've got better at it, and the comments I've received are always really good."

His own love of words didn't begin at an early age like it does with many, and Martin explains that he didn't own his first book until he was an adult serving in the army.

"We never had books when we were kids – I didn't get my first book until I was about 20 serving in the Staffordshire Regiment. It was Shogun by James Clavell.

"I have three lovely grown-up children, two boys and a girl and one 18-month-old beautiful granddaughter. I would read to my children when they were small and they would do the voices."

Now he creates his own tales, and they're going down a storm.

"I like prose poetry, and I enjoy the work of Billy Collins and Sarah Whiteley and Pam Ayres. I'm nothing like them, but I'm nothing like anyone else either."

Sarah Whiteley reviewed his book, Silence Happens,



Doing it by the book – Martin in the school library

on Amazon, saying: "This is a beautifully meditative little book – one worthy of carrying around with you for those moments when you find yourself in need of reminder of why life is a gorgeous thing."

A brilliant review, and Martin is taking it all in his stride. He says: "I write at cafe's Baked, The Lime Tree and Cupcake Lane.

"I like to go out and have a walk along the canal and take photographs too. I'm always trying to photograph a heron; they're my favourite birds. I'd say I was quite the outdoorsy type."

"I don't watch television and haven't watched it for about three years now, I rarely buy the papers and don't own a radio. I enjoy watching films, opera and I have lots of books – mostly non-fiction. I also collect Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. I've written two short Sherlock Holmes stories and had one published."

Martin's poems are very explanatory, and he doesn't

enjoy the kind of verse that wraps itself up in complex mysteries.

"I can't read other people's poems if they're ambiguous. I don't go too in-depth or confusing, I just say it like it is," he says

"I like freeverse and writing poetry when I can feel the beat of it. I'm not into all this iambic pentameter and that kind of thing. I never plan a poem, I just sit there and let it come. I don't write to a form, I just get a feeling in my gut or a monster headache and so I'll have a glass of wine or rum and get it out. I'll go back and edit it, of course, but I don't write to a form, I just let it flow."

"I write in first person, so people can relate to it. It's almost like if I don't write, I'll explode. I do love it, so I'm always writing things down."

"I'll always work, but my dream I suppose is to get published."

"I've never thought myself a poet before, or a wordsmith or any of those kinds of stupid words. I'm not scared of failure, I think I'm more scared of success!"

● To find out more about Martin Shone's work, visit agapintheclouds.wordpress.com