

MICHELANGELO: PAINTER AND POET (V2)

By Michael Lee Johnson

Michelangelo



with steel balls
and a wire brush
wishing he was
wearing motorcycle leathers,
going wild and crazy,
stares cross-eyed at the
Sistine Chapel ceiling-
nose touching moist paint,
body stretch out on a plank,

bones held by ropes from falling-
delirious, painting that face of Jesus
and the Prophets
with a camel hair brush;
in such a position, transition
a genie emerges as a poet-
words not paint
start writing his sonnets,
a second career is born-
nails and thorns
digging at his words,
flashing red paint:
it's finished.

Rose Petals in a Dark Room (V3)



I walk through this poem one step at a time.
I walk in a mastery of this night and light

my money changers walk behind me
they're fools like clowns in a shadow of sin,
they're busy as bees as drunken lovers,
Sodom and Gomorrah before this salt pillar falls.

In a shadow of red rose pedals
drunken lovers walk changing Greek and Roman
currency to Jewish money or Tyrian shekels-
they're fools, all fools, at what they do.
Everyone's life is a conflict.
They're my lovers and my sinners
I can't sleep at night without them
by my bed grass near that sea of Galilee.
Fish in my cloth nets beget my friends, my converts.
I pray in this garden alone sweat
while my disciples whitewash their dreams.

The rose has a tender thorn compared to my arrest,
and soon crucifixion.

It's here this morning and this night come together,
where this sea and this land depart,
where these villages stone and mortar crumble.

I'm but a poet of this ministry,
rose petals in a dark room fall.
Everyone's life is a conflict.
But mine is mastery of light and neon night
and I walk behind these footsteps of no one.

Rain (V2)



In the rain,
this thunder
on his way home
he rebelled.
He a disco dancer,
single Friday night award winner
on the floor. High school dropout.
He drove off the road edge.
He was drunk, Jack Daniel's
was his driving instructor.
Jack Daniel bottle left at grave.
It never rains in a dry casket.

Shelter under this roof,
no worries about cops□
anymore.

Waltz, Footprints in Snow (V2)

December 24th, I find footprints in this snow, yours frozen, our broken dreams.
Will your lawyer Grinch my wallet, fleece me while I pray to Jesus Christ tonight?
Even the devil stoked in flames has standards, jukebox baby.
Even Jesus suffers with the poor, feels lonely on winter moon distant planets.
Don't torture me, let me drive you home in our old Mack dump truck.
Hear these sounds, new records on this old radio.
Care to dance a new waltz
renew, no mirages just free no chains—
or drift back to those old vintage footprints—
fog covering over old snow?



Bio

Michael Lee Johnson lived 10 years in Canada during the Vietnam era and is a dual citizen of the United States and Canada. Today he is a poet, freelance writer, amateur photographer, and small business owner in Itasca, Illinois. Mr. Johnson published in more than 1072 new publications, his poems have appeared in 38 countries, he edits, publishes 10 poetry sites. Michael Lee Johnson, has been nominated for 2 Pushcart Prize awards poetry 2015/1 Best of the Net 2016/2 Best of the Net 2017, 1 Best of the Net 2018. 189 poetry videos are now on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/user/poetrymanusa/videos>. Editor-in-chief poetry anthology, *Moonlight Dreamers of Yellow*
Haze: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1530456762>; editor-in-chief poetry anthology, *Dandelion in a Vase of Roses* available here <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1545352089>. Editor-in-chief *Warriors with Wings: the Best in Contemporary Poetry*, <http://www.amazon.com/dp/1722130717>.

