

About My Books

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Specfab Industries Ltd.

Edmonton, Alberta

2014

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ISBN 978-0-9916849-4-6 (pbk.)

Publisher: Specfab Industries Ltd.
13559 - 123A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T5L 2Z1
Telephone: 780-454-6396

2nd Printing: PageMaster Publication Services Inc.
11340 - 120 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
T5G 0W5
Telephone: 780-425-9303

Cover Designs: Front: Some of author's book covers
Back: Some comments by readers

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*I dedicate this book to my grandchildren,
Garrett, Megan, Samantha, and Jordan:
May you find something of value in
my books!*

§

My gratitude goes to my daughter Nancy,
for her valued advice.
All mistakes remaining are entirely mine.

Preface

The main reason I wrote my books is probably best expressed by Will and Ariel Durant, in page 102 of their book *The Lessons of History*:

“The historian will not mourn because he can see no meaning in human existence except that which man puts into it; let it be our pride that we ourselves may put meaning into our lives, and sometimes a significance that transcends death. If a man is fortunate he will, before he dies, gather up as much as he can of his civilized heritage and transmit it to his children. And to his final breath he will be grateful for this inexhaustible legacy, knowing that it is our nourishing mother and our lasting life.”

The comments by Will and Ariel Durant express my sentiments exactly; I couldn't put it better.

Some people do not have the time to read any of my books and a brief synopsis of each book may suffice for them, or get them interested enough to read the book. In fact, when I tell people that I am working on a new book or that I just finished one, they usually ask me what it's all about.

Beyond this, people ask me how long it took me to write the book, or what prompted me to write it. If it is a story book, how much of it is fact, i.e. based on personal experience, and how much of it is fiction?

People are also interested in what an author has to do to obtain an ISBN (international standard book number) and a CIP (cataloguing in publication). To obtain an ISBN is fairly easy for me, because I use my

consulting company as the publisher. I usually get it within hours of my email request. To obtain the CIP is more difficult. I have to electronically submit a six-page application form, supplying all the pertinent information: publisher, contact person, planned date of publication, date CIP is needed, author's name and birth date, ISBN, and description (plus title page, preface, introduction, table of contents, bibliography, index, if any – to be submitted as separate files). Then, I must patiently wait for two weeks to get the CIP data to be added to the information page of the book. One condition to get the CIP is I must commit myself to publish at least one hundred books.

Another requirement is to send the book for legal deposit to the Library and Archives Canada.

The manuscripts are usually proofread by my daughter Nancy, some willing and able friends, and me. Also, while I am waiting for the CIP data, I scan the electronic copy for final formatting adjustments.

Finally, after the CIP data is inserted, a PDF copy goes to the printer. When the printer's proof is ready, more proofreading is required, because the printer may have introduced some undesirable changes, like other fonts.

Publishing is onerous and time consuming, but authors usually do not mind.

Arthur O.R. Thormann
Edmonton, April 24, 2014

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Exposed To Winds

Exposed to Winds had never been planned as a book. It started out as a collection of individual poems, which accumulated in my drawer for over twenty years. One day, I met Betty Jorgensen at a funeral, and she asked me: “When will I see your poems published in a book?” I had given Betty a copy of the odd poem. “They are rather personal to me,” I answered. “I don’t mind giving them to my friends, but I hadn’t planned to publish them.”

She disagreed. “They’re much too valuable to hide away in some drawer,” she cried. I told her I’d think about it. Thus, Betty’s prodding gave birth to my poem book.

Each poem has a story behind it. In other words, the collection of 100 poems is really a collection of 100 hidden stories. Here are a few examples:

I took the title for the book from one of the poems, depicting a lonely stone that I admired in the middle of nowhere, on a windy day during one of my travels. The poem describes the usefulness of the stone to human beings and ends: Exposed to winds,/ No friends to love,/ I live my life in silence.

When our daughter Nancy was born, we still lived in an apartment, which was heated by cast iron steam radiators, and when Nancy started to crawl, we were anxious to keep her away from the hot radiator. I warned her sternly, “Do not touch! Hot! Hot!”

What I didn't realize was, "hot" meant nothing to her, and she had to touch the radiator to find out what it meant. She soon found out and started screaming.

Later, when I started writing poems, I thought about this event, and it dawned on me that new words can truly cause some problems for us. This realization prompted me to write the poem *In the Beginning*, with the unknown word *xodipusz*. However, it may have been better for the poem to appear later in the book, since it bothered some people who did not understand the significance behind the poem to encounter this unknown word right at the beginning, turning them off to read further.

The word appears once more in a later poem, *The Missing Link*, in an appeal for help to find that which is forever delusive, symbolized by the unknown word.

One day I was walking along Jasper Avenue in the city of Edmonton when I came across an old man padding along barefoot. It wasn't a warm day, and I was surprised to see that, because I had never seen anyone walking barefoot in city streets, especially an old man, clad in an overcoat. It made me wonder what kind of life he must have led, and a poem formed itself in my mind. I quickly found a place to sit down and write it into my note book, with the title *Barefoot in the Street*.

Another old man whom I admired was a leader of a group of people who depended on him. He led them successfully for many years, and then his ability began to diminish. He should have helped find a replacement leader, but he insisted on carrying on. Eventually, he led his people to disaster. Again, a poem formed in my mind, which I called *Their Leader*.

Exposed To Winds

An alcoholic not only does harm to himself but often others as well. One man I knew told me his sad story at one of my visits and how he pulled himself out of it. In one of his drunken stupors, he had clobbered his loving wife – the only friend he still had left. This cruel act decided him to join AA, and from then his health and attitude improved steadily. On the way home, I stopped the car and captured his life story in a poem called *Not Daring is Fatal*.

A woman I knew had a delicate, almost ethereal, look. She was quite an individualist. There was not an ounce of conformity in her. I admired her for that, and she ended up in my poem *The Artist*.

A dictator of a group of people, or a country, can, and often does, influence his or her subjects' minds. I experienced this phenomenon in Germany, before the end of World War II. This experience prompted me to write the poem *Mind Seduced*.

Eventually, I thought about all of my friends. I have lots of them. I thought about true friendship and what made a true friend, and I decided that my wife Renate is the only true friend I have. This resulted in the poem called *My Friend*.

After I published the book, the *Barrhead Leader* chose to do a review of it in its section called *town and country*. Here are some excerpts of the review:

Arthur Thormann, a past resident of Barrhead, has published his collection of poetry, *Exposed to Winds*. His poems, and even the entire collection, take on a circular path in which birth, life, and death are only parts of the whole picture. He writes about the inevitability of the cycle, but not always in a celebratory way

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that it is so often portrayed. In *The Cycle Of Life*, Thormann writes of the tediousness of it...Many of the poems in the collection center around nature – quiet settings – where the poet reflects on the world around him. “The rain: she was a gentle mist,/ Such as never does any harm,/ And what she touched was merely kissed/ By her gentle, disarming charm.”

Besides the quiet musings of the poet, there are also stories of individuals. *The Busy Housewife*, *Her Golden Age*, *Joe The Farmer*, and *The Happy Couple* are some of the poems that look at the different struggles people may face in their lives. “And so in ignorance of this,/ Both our lovers went amiss –/ Now, singly, they’ll attempt to find/ To which together they were blind,” Thormann wrote in the poem *The Happy Couple*.

Well, there you have it. These are some of the stories and comments I decided to pass on to my readers. To pass on my story behind each of the 100 poems would require a separate book. Besides, my original thought was that each reader of my poems will probably relate his or her own story to the poems.

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