

## Scott Norman Rosenthal

I grew up with severe neuro-metabolic problems. Agonizing symptoms that were so bizarre that I believed myself to be a freak of nature. Eventually, I turned to alternative medicine, based on diet and exercise.

While growing up my sensory input and assimilation were flawed. In the Spring of 1986, I was, for the first time, able to perceive the color and texture of a flying bird. Due to sensory suppression, I wasn't very intelligent but intellectualized. My mind perceived in words and numbers, rather than omnipresent, multi-dimensional images. I took to written and spoken word and to still photography.

I wasn't allowed to complete high school. During the Fall Semester of 1977, Prof. Stephen Dunn reached out, inviting me to attend his Workshop In Poetry, Stockton State College, Pomona, N.J. In trying to succeed as an artist in Phila. I was faced with cliquishness and bigotry, and exploitation, usually due to my neurodiversity. However, Pam Africa, who spearheaded Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu Jamal, referred to one exclusion as "racism". I was active with Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu Jamal, ADAPT, and other efforts. I was a staff member of "Poets and Prophets" in Phila. I was eventually eliminated as I spoke out against discrimination at the hands of Lamont Brown Steptoe. No one maintained that the discrimination didn't occur, but he was above me in the hierarchy. It should be noted that both Jerome Robinson and Ali Jamal, Black men, Mr. Jamal Islamic, granted me venues. Sometime I believe in 1990, I read with Etheridge Knight in Indianapolis. I also housed him for a night or so while he visited Phila.

The director, of the Painted Bride Art Center, Jerry Givnish, admitted to what Mr. Steptoe had done. I was granted a venue. It presented a number of underrepresented poets with disabilities. It was the only time that the late Laura Hershey read in Phila.

In the past 2 years, I've been published in: Oddball, IWO, Art of Autism, Northeast Review, 13 Mynah Birds, Fixed and Free, and a number of other publications. Lacking formal education I've never learned to keep precise records. The internet and Zoom have opened things for me.

I have been vilified as racist and transphobic for holding differing views. I research situations to determine facts, regardless of who is on which "side." I've held hopes of coaching people, perhaps children, in poetical composition. I've coached in the past. One woman was a consumer of the mental health system. I secured her a reading through "Poets and Prophets" in Phila., decades ago. It was the first time she'd read to an audience. The consensus was that she did exceptionally.

I'm currently stuck on composing a folk opera. My health has suffered since I was forced to move to NE Vermont in order to secure affordable housing. I must exercise and the road is unsafe to walk. Housing in Phila. is reserved for consumers of mental health. This violates the Americans with Disabilities Act(A.D.A.).

I've never gotten my creativity off the ground.