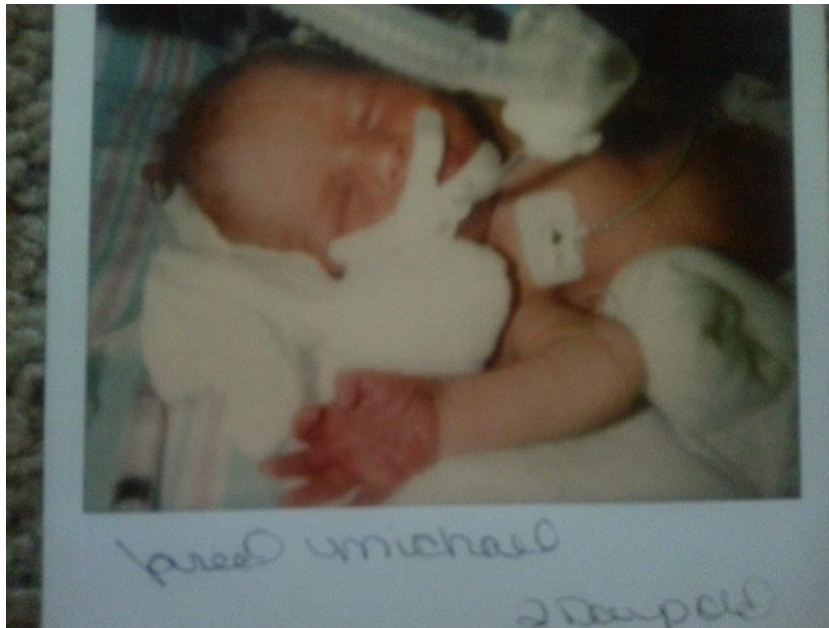


Death Songs: Ten Years Later

A Short History Lesson

People always ask me: *"Where did Death Songs originate?"*

And that question has a very long and sordid history that goes back to the origins of the author himself. It is a letter to the grim reaper himself, a thank you for sparing that young life that barely made it through the first few days of being alive.



Tragic Beginnings:

Removing the mask of the pen name, hello, my name is Jared Michael, the man behind the poems and universe of "Walter Red". My story started in June of 1989, in the small town of Hartford, WI where I was born with my twin brother Dakotah. We were born prematurely and had to be cesarian section from our mother due to complications. My brother was healthy and fine, myself on the other hand (example A above) was a whole different story.. My lungs were underdeveloped and sticking together, the umbilical cord was around my neck and they had to quickly remove it before any damage had occurred.

A ventilation tube was placed into my side to make my lungs begin to work for themselves and get them from being unstuck. I have a scar near my armpit to even show as well as this only photo.

I was the boy who cheated death through the night. The one who became a miracle to survive. And I wasn't gonna stop there, I was going to create a dream bigger than myself, and I did.

In my middle School days, I was a special child, I excelled very well with my English classes and absorbed everything like a sponge, soaking up all of the arts and books I could get my hands on. In 5/6th grade we were given an

assignment to create a poem based off a letter. I forget what letter I was given (I believe it was 'S' if memory serves me correctly). What happened next was the beginning of learning my own origins and the truths I was never told.

I wrote a poem about how I had known I had died and came back. The teacher was terrified and I was sent to the administrators office to discuss it. My father confirmed that it was true, and then explained the history of our birth.

A sad beginning that never truly made me feel sad, but connected to the other side. I never have feared death itself, more so wanting it, day in and day out. But those days have long since passed.

In my High School years I continued working closely in studying the arts evermore, starting to read books as a sophomore at a college level reading (the likes of Tolstoy, Pynchon, Nabokov, Dostoyevsky, etc al.) In Freshman year I birthed the Poetry club at my school, and actually had people join, albeit it was only about 5 people. It was nothing short of an accomplishment for a teenager to do that.

I was introduced to new old & modern day poets and thinkers like Saul Williams, Frost, Ginsberg, Vonnegut among the many other beatniks and vagabond whiskey drinking/chain-smoking artists from a dying generation.

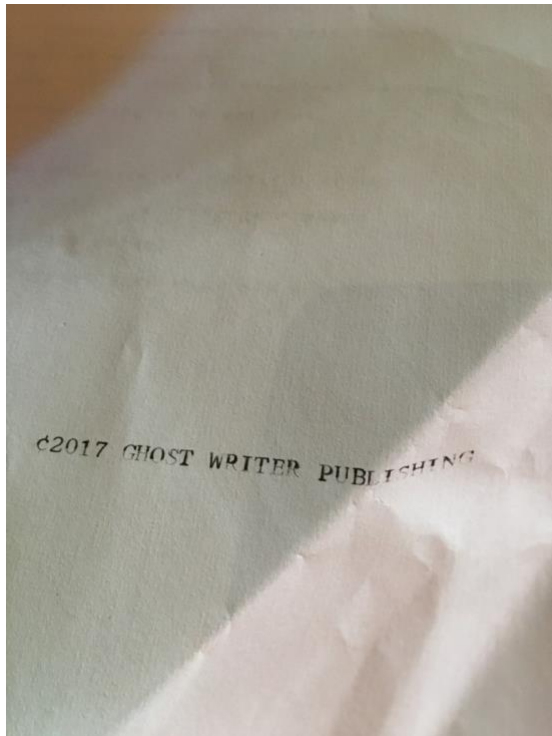
Hemingway became my inspiration, I was molded by the shocking yet simple and intensity of "said the shotgun to the head" by Williams, the philosophy of Tolstoy's Critique on Dogmatic Theology Brought my mind to new planes of philosophical thinking.

My sponge like brain wanted more. And then the darkness began brewing, slowly yet brooding in the distance. a dark cloud that bringing a storm of a dangerous nature. One filled with something more dangerous than thunder and lightning. A depression that hit so heavy, it began to make me spiral.

For years on I lived in a constant state of sorrow, wallowing in glasses full of whiskey and more. Regrets filling me up and making me hate myself.

Fast forward to somewhere between 2012-13, I attempted to commit suicide three times within a year (not for the attention, but just to end all the suffering I felt, to release myself from the routine that I was caught in.) After that breaking point I sought something different and finally removed myself from a place that was so depressive it likely damaged my psyche to this day permanently.

The initial drafting of it was originally conceptualized sometime in 2017 based on the only photo of the original manuscript cover and a single photo with some metadata that says June/July 2017.



I recall starting it while living in West Seattle with my boyfriend at the time, still fairly new to Seattle and still trying to get myself onto my feet. I found a typewriter at a Good will for around \$40 and it was perfect (it was only missing the J key). With a secured and dedicated piece of equipment, so began the typing of words onto paper, committing a knife to the gut and spilling it all over the pages that are here today. I remember the moment I finished the last entry to the book was a moment of divinity it felt like. I knew it was the right one and the right time to finish it. This was the end of my Death Song but the beginning of something bigger than I would have ever imagined.

West Seattle was a short-lived experience, but an experience nonetheless, and I moved into Seattle proper. Finally finding a place to rent in the historic Central District, where the next chapters unfolded faster than I could have ever expected.

Death songs started very young, but it became something that I managed to condense into small bite size pieces that pack a mighty punch. Each stanza is a proclamation that I survived, I pushed through, I never gave up even when I wanted to.

everyone lifted me up even when I was crying on the floor, bleeding out, hoping for that sweet sweet death. and the grim reaper would walk upon my body and whisper “it is not your time child” and walk away.

AND HERE WE ARE NOW, TEN YEARS LATER, STILL CREATING AND STILL PUSHING BOUNDARIES. (STILL CRAVING DEATH, BUT IN A MORE POETIC ESSENCE).

Her'es to Death Songs and to being a survivor of grief and learning to keep going, and to many more songs that have been unsung.