

Further Conversation with the Author

by Larry Strattner

He thought himself perceptive, but he was not. He thought he was creative, perhaps he was. In either case few shared his view and he remained marginalized, taking small jabs at the balloon of perception, none sharp enough to pop it.

He wrote things seldom read by others and remained on the periphery; his feet stuck in goop excreted from his insecurity pores.

He self-published five novels, none War and Peace, but all somewhat entertaining, at least as literary as the gad-zillion crappy romance novels sold each year.

I asked him why he had never gotten his work published and he said, "I guess because it's not as popular as romance, a universal topic about which people lie to themselves continually, keeping the market active."

On another occasion he said, "I never send my work out to literary agents or publishers because it's such a lousy process." I have no experience with that particular activity but I could, and did, assure him no matter what you did, convincing others your work was significant, or excellent, or any other superlative you chose, was a long, hard road. Even a door-to-door Bible salesman has a better life than an author. The person who said, *life is short, art is long*, knew what he was talking about.

"After your death is confirmed," I assured him, "a hardcover first edition of your books, will sell for millions at auction in New York. Greatness is only rewarded after it is certain no more of a particular vintage will be produced. That would include your stuff."

"I'll rest a lot more easily knowing," he said. "Maybe I can write a book about all the things I wish I had, and make-believe I have these things. I can fool myself into a semblance of satisfaction. I might

even imagine one of my first editions has been auctioned for millions while I am still alive.”

“Not a half bad idea,” I said. “All the sports people do a thing they call *self-talk* or *visualization*. Any time you have a mind-body connection where muscle-memory helps get you to a goal those tools have proven effective. You might even drag yourself into popularity and success while you're still alive. It's a better way to spend your visualization time than watching pornography where the gratification is so short-lived. I wonder if that's how all those women who write the romance novels get their jollies.”

“I wouldn't know the answer,” he laughed. “But it's plausible.”

“What's plausible, and you should visualize this, is becoming drunk, dissolute and aggressive. Make outlandish statements and claims. Throw your drink on detractors. Make obscene remarks to women of status. Be prepared for some fisticuffs if required. Most writers are weenies and you can pound them. Even if you lose, you'll make the news.”

“Just spell my name right,” he chortled. “I'm feeling ready, poised for the big time.”

“Get to it. In no time you'll be invited to all the parties. I've given you the complete list of behaviors which worked for many other authors. You might also want to practice up on colorful vulgarity, although I would caution you to spend some time on this. It's one of the most difficult skills and can be very off-putting if not done correctly. Also, focus on trying not to die. Being famous isn't nearly as fun if you're dead.”

“Right. We already sort of covered that.”

“Sic transit Gloria mundi, Dude.”

“What are you, some kind of frigging Altar Boy?”

