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My Father's Room the Four Seasons of the Master Myth - A Review

*My Father's Room the Four Seasons of the Master Myth*

A Review, **Crystal Roberts**

Roland Salazar Rose has released for *free* an e-book entitled *My Father's Room the Four Seasons of the Master Myth*. An Opening, at the Biblioteca Publica, Sala Quetza, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico was held on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2008; part of the *Pen Readers Aloud Series*, hosted by Bill Pearlman .He read from the memoir and showed images that are on a DVD that he expects to release with the published book.

As a new author he faces the usual problems in finding a publisher. But his task is more difficult, as he desires to have images along with text and many publishers do not have any interest in selling books this way. Although he is seeking a publisher by the usual methods he is probably adding to his difficulties by producing an e-book first. You may download the *e-book* and images *free* from his Website: <http://www.salazargallery.com/> In his anticipated 'published edition' he includes a DVD as part of the book price. This is a unique combination. One publisher, in a declining publishing request wrote him: "I think that it would be terrific to present the verbal, visual, and autobiographical in the way you describe. Unfortunately, we don't publish anything like you propose, don't have the capacity right now to include CD/DVDs with our books, and would have trouble managing a complex project like yours given our current production schedule." In some small way providing CDs or DVDs to accompany written text is finding some favor in the publishing world. As of this time I believe that only *Infinity Publishing* provides this sort of service for those who want to add audio and visual to their written publication.

Written in two Parts; **Part I** of *My Father's Room* begins with the author's relationship with his father and unfolds the saga of his life, describing how he came to move from his home in Maine, to live in "*my father's room*" in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. There has been so many memoirs of late that I consider to be the saving grace in this work by the author is what he states to be his reason for undertaking writing the book. He is a painter, an internationally acclaimed one, not a writer. He wrote in his *Preface*; "I am a visual artist by choice and dedication. With that in mind I must say that writing *My Father's Room* wasn't painful nor was it joyous. It was an outpouring, exactly the way I paint: get it out and put it down before it escapes you...My memoir was accomplished the same way. It is pure emotion an urge to 'just do it': not dominated by my intellectual side, yet not divorced from the creative urge within. My aim in writing about myself was to give my images a platform they could stand on and have a voice capturing those memories in my life that will facilitate in appreciating my art." He achieves this goal with distinction.

His prose is not distinguished; he has a voice, yes, but lacking the experience in an established writer. Many memoirs written today lack the touch of an experienced writer and publish as biographical exercises. The author does not fall in that pit. His memoir is more accomplished and some chapters express his passion for his painting and his humanism in a concise manner. As the book unfolds the reader comes to understand that the back and forth, present and past, are a flow of memory brought on by a pending divorce. The chapters merge smoothly even though you move from present to past with him as he ruminates on his father, the pending divorce, and his artistic journey. The unfolding in **Part I** of his memories of his father, his pending divorce do dovetail and are on balance plotted well. The concluding chapter in **Part I** do not integrate fully

with the preceding chapters. He does solve this satisfactorily and does so with some of his best prose, in the **Epilogue**. This brings the reader from the past to the present. He writes: “It was suggested that I ‘tell who you are today’, and ‘how you got here.’ That while appropriate as a comment and a good suggestion as to what to do for a conclusion in Part I of the memoir, nevertheless did present a cliff that I had to climb all alone. I couldn’t reach out and engage some classic formula that one is given in school in Creative Writing 101. If I was to be ‘honest’ I would have to bare more of myself than I had done in Part I and express in an unalterable manner that I am and what I was made of. Not easy!”

In **Part II** he presents a monologue for each of the ‘Four Seasons’: metaphorically spring, summer, fall and winter, seasons of the spirit not climatic. The monologue on his DVD that will accompany the hard cover edition is done by a voice over by the author, followed by 25 images from the Four Seasons Series of 1,000 paintings; each of the other seasons on the DVD follow in a similar manner. After the display of the images on the DVD, Salazar does a voice over: a right/left brain dialogue that critiques his monologue in each of the seasons. The revised DVD is in final production by: Chip Taylor Communications: [www.chiptaylor.com](http://www.chiptaylor.com). Salazar has proposed that a *free* work in progress DVD be included with the published book displaying the first 100 images in the 1,000 series and music from Vivaldi’s “Four Seasons” on background during his monologue. When the 1,000 images are included in the final version of *The Four Seasons*, original music on background in the dialogue is to be added. The final DVD is to be distributed by Chip Taylor Communications to educational institutions, museums and the general public offered as a discount for those who purchase the book with the work in progress DVD.

Whereas **Part I** of the memoir expresses what shaped and influenced his work as a visual artist **Part II** regresses to his earlier days in Europe and his first marriage, mundane jobs and his family life in Maine with four children. Throughout the memoir he explores his development as an artist who returns to his passion in his elder years, finding his “sacred space.” It is a fact that Americans are seeking their “place,” a phenomenon significantly heightened in this post 9/11 era. We seek a ‘sacred place,’ the place that Joseph Campbell writes of so eloquently, where we can be more human.

It is readily apparent that this is a complicated writing project he proposes and more than likely not going to find a publisher willing to take a gamble on an unknown writer and not world-wide known painter. This is an opus under construction, to be sure, so one can’t comment on the final production only on the electronic book: that is *free* for anyone who wishes it by downloading it from his website: <http://www.salazargallery.com/>. He used the book’s two parts, as a natural breaking point so as to minimize the download time needed for the entire e-book which takes 13.8 MB. A thoughtful idea and may help in those interested in reading the book or printing it and reading it that way. He has a synopsis on his website and this outlines the book and displays a selection of images.

It is no small wonder that he refers to *The Four Seasons of the Master Myth* as “the meat and potatoes of my existence.” But, it is more than technology he brings to the reader. For the mixed media work in the ‘Four Seasons of the Master Myth’ which began in 1990 in Maine and was completed one-year later in Mexico. He created 1,000 images: one after another, never destroying any piece, he explains; “they “tumbled out of my head—sequentially.” He found his philosophical construct for the ‘Four Seasons of the Master Myth’ in a text written by the late Professor J. K. Feibleman. In *Aesthetics* Feibleman wrote of the “master myth”: success in spring, hubris in summer, nemesis in the fall, death in winter and the consequent resurrection the following spring.

“Art,” Bill Moyers writes, “connects us to ennobling ideas, it challenges us to greater personal horizons.” Here, Salazar, the artist comes into play. Spread throughout the book, usually assigned at the end of a chapter is images from the series of 1,000; these are put on show in black & white. In the Appendix in the e-book are 100 of the images in color, thumbnails. While I never like that size image, they do give you an idea of the original work. But, you need not be disappointed as the author includes a link (that ubiquitous thing we find on our Websites) to a slideshow, which can be secured, by link from the e-book. The slideshow shows 100 images and are brilliantly displayed.

This first time author and e-book presenter gives you a vivid picture of his art and his life in art. He is quite right when he says, “Today, technology allows me to bridge the gap, to ‘show and tell’ simultaneously and to do so economically, by providing with the written word, images and voice by the artist that speak to the body of work.”

It is a good read and a worthwhile effort by a first time author. It is free as a download from his Website: [www.e-artbooks.com](http://www.e-artbooks.com) We may hear more about this author when the 1,000 images, voice and music are produced in 2010 in his DVD *The Four Seasons of the Master Myth*

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