

Authors Unleashed online

Interview with Matt Beam

Monday, July 12, 2010

www.mattbeam.com

Let's get some of the typical interview questions out of the way first. When did you first know that you wanted to be a writer?

I knew I wanted to be a writer some time in high school, but I didn't do much about it until my late-twenties. I call 0-28 my research years!

Can you tell us a little bit about your road to publishing?

My road to publishing, while always a road – and I truly appreciated that some writers bushwhack for years before they even see a path – has had all kinds of bumps along the way. The first publisher to buy one of my books, *CAN YOU SPELL REVOLUTION?*, took a full year and a half to actually say yes, and then a week later it went bankrupt and my manuscript became a frozen asset. It wasn't until I sold my second book, *GETTING TO FIRST BASE WITH DANALDA CHASE*, that the original first was resold and became my second. Got it? :) For those first two novels, I did many and significant edits for the US market, which was a whole Odyssey unto itself.

Tell us a little bit about either your latest or upcoming release. If you could only tell your readers one thing about the story that had to convince us to buy the book, what would it be?

LAST DECEMBER, my most recent YA novel, was my attempt at doing two things: to authentically and honestly represent what it is like to be a 15-year-old male, and to express this reality in a lyrical and (I hope!) aesthetically pleasing way. The novel is written in the form of a letter from said young man, Steven, to his unborn sister, Sam, and it is his attempt at trying to explain to her why it is he has to do what it is he has to do. :)

What, or who, has been the greatest inspiration for your stories?

I would have to say the greatest inspiration for my stories are my own memories of childhood and adolescence. It seems that I've retained this part of my life in incident and feeling. It's just not all that hard for me to recall the dizzying affects of a first crush, or the awkward attempts one makes as a teen at being cool.

Let's hear about your family, who I'm sure are thrilled to have a published author among them!

I come from a family of teachers, so while they are thrilled at my becoming an author, I think they are still sort of scratching their heads about how it all came to be. To tell you the truth, I sometimes pinch myself – it's still pretty amazing to me that I've become an author.

Now for some fun facts. What's your greatest comfort food?

I am addicted to Eggs Benedict and spicy, spicy wings.

What are the first three things you do when you wake up in the morning?

A coffee, a few moves of online Scrabble, and then to work!

If I came to your house and looked in your closet/attic/basement, what's the one thing that would surprise me the most?

All my camping gear might make you scratch your head a bit. I go on canoe trips annually and there is a preponderance of little containers, water-proof bags, and cooking equipment, which all must come on these trips.

The food goes into a big, tightly-sealed, bear-proof can, with shoulder-straps for carrying.

Everyone asks the question about "if you could be a tree, which tree would you be?" so I want to know: If you could be a color, which color would it be, and why?

It would be the color blue because after having green as my favourite colour for years and years, I've just made the big switch. Blue is beautiful, no? I don't know why I never saw it. Also, Sky Blue Sky is the name of an album by one of my favourite bands, Wilco. It's a great album and a great album name.

Who is your favorite cartoon character?

Bart Simpson

Which cartoon character is most like you?

Bart Simpson

If you could beam yourself to anywhere in the world ("Beam me up, Scotty!"), during any time in history, where and when would it be—and why?

I like this question because "beam" is a word, nay, a name that I am very familiar with. When I introduce myself, I say, "I'm Matt Beam, as in sun, moon, laser – not

fava, black, jumping." I've always wanted to go to India. It is an exciting place to be these days, and I've always gravitated toward the people.

So what's your favorite type of music to listen to? Favorite musical artists? Do you listen to music while you're writing?

I like all kinds of music but I err toward something called Indie Pop. Some of my favourite bands/singersongwriters include Metric, Hayden, Granddaddy, and Okkervil River. I tend to write in cafés and I find the sonic background helps me focus in. There's nothing more daunting than the silence of my home office!

Do you have any favorite T.V. shows?

Da Vinci's Inquest was my favourite show for years.

Movies you watch over and over again? Down by Law by Jim Jarmusch changed my life when I saw it at 16. I watch it every couple of years.

What was the last movie you saw at the theater?

Broken Embraces by Pedro Almodovar.

You have the chance to give one piece of advice to your teen readers. What would it be?

Keep reading! Along with being a great and wonderful pastime, it quietly makes you smarter, more eloquent, more knowledgeable, and better at arguing for the most important person in the world: you!

One last question. What stories can we look forward to from you in the future?

I am about to write my first novel with a female protagonist! I've been excited about doing this for years. The rest is a secret. Oh yeah, and I'm a photographer. My first book of photography, CITY ALPHABET, was a big hit, so I'm doing a follow up for 2011!

Again, thanks so much for joining us at TeensReadToo.com!

POSTED BY JENWARD RIPAT 5:19 PM