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**INTERVIEW :: The Next Big Thing, February 2013**

My brother-in-arms Matt Hart (co-founder & editor at *Forklift, Ohio*, author of a new book of poetry titled *Debauched Debauched*) tagged me into the ring for The Next Big Thing, a self-interview project in which people talk about the projects they're working on. Here, I talk about my new book of poems, *Right Now More Than Ever*.

**What is the working title of the book?**

*Right Now More Than Ever*.

**Where did the idea come from for the book?**

The book is more of a process than the articulation of a single initiating idea, more an action than anything else. Though, stepping outside of the book, there are lots of ideas or themes that are explored throughout it – the collision of elements & the noise that impact can make, the unreachable past combined with panic for the future to create a frenetic & discombobulated present, how we decide what to love & how.

The poems in the book are the processes of my thinking on a variety of subjects over the last several years, & that thinking is in language – so the poems inherently foreground IDEAS but also PRAXIS. I'm not sure you can separate the ostensible subject matter of these poems from the way that information is deployed in words & sentences, stanzas & lines.

**What genre does your book fall under?**

Poetry.

**What actors would you choose to play the part of your characters in a movie rendition?**

There aren't too many people characters in the book, I guess. There's a "you" which shifts throughout the book, from poem to poem, but always transcends any kind of set identity & so, like any good apparition, should only be viewed peripherally in passing, a glimpse.

Of course, I imagine myself, the speaker, as George Clooney or Jude Law when in fact I'm really Philip Seymour Hoffman or Gollum.

The better question to imagine is who would play the leaves or the clouds, who would play the sky I'm always looking at, what person can be an actual star in the firmament. I'm hoping the director allows me a walk-on cameo, maybe as a pile of melting snow.

**What is the one sentence synopsis of your book?**

Once upon a time long long ago  
I was born in Syracuse & immediately  
started dying.

from "Rise Time," in the book!

**How long did it take you to write the first draft of the manuscript?**

The first draft of many of the poems in the manuscript were written starting in autumn of 2009, the winter that followed & the spring of 2010. At that point, I put the manuscript together & just sat on it for various reasons & every time I would revisit it, I would reevaluate it. I'd knock a poem or two out (poems that seemed repetitive of the themes as I saw them) & I would add a poem or two (usually freshly minted, & which seemed responsive to the same energies that generated the bulk of the book). Then, as it got closer to time to actually make the manuscript into a book, I put the manuscript through a stress test which resulted in a major changing of the guard – something like 15 poems, including a 14 pager from around the center, were dropped from the book in favor of a handful of newer poems (written mostly spring 2012 – autumn 2012) which I felt offered an interesting contrast to, & perspective on, the manuscript.

**Who or what inspired you to write this book?**

I hope it's not a cop out to say that my life & experiences are what inspired me to write this book – all the everything that surrounds me. Driving to work or going to the grocery store. Paying bills at the kitchen table & having dinner with friends. Shoveling snow & kicking leaves.

With this book, specifically, I need to declare that so many of the poems were written TO (though not necessarily about) my brother Matt Hart. He saved my life a million times a day during the fall of 2009 & into the next year (when many of these poems were written, see above). So many different things aligned or collapsed. Matt & I found ourselves talking on the phone more than we normally do (maybe daily instead of 2 or 3 times a week) & emailing each other more than normal (a few times a day, often with new poems attached). The pace was exhilarating but not ever overwhelming – it was a natural extension of situations in our lives (Matt's broken foot or me falling apart) fused to our very electric personal + aesthetic connection. An amazing burst of generative activity. Matt would be reading something, so I'd read it too. I'd write a poem & he'd answer it (maybe not always explicitly). Vice versa. I know we were attuned in ways that are rare on this planet, that have been rare in my life. We also got to spend a lot more time together than normal – birthdays & holidays, in the car together for 2 weeks - & I think literally bringing our lives together in that way did something as well. It probably goes without saying that this book is for him.

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**Will your book be self-published or represented by an agency?**

*Right Now More Than Ever* will be published by H\_NGM\_N Books in May of 2013.

**My tagged creative types for next week are:**

Jessica Campbell

Jennifer H. Fortin

Tom Kaczynski

Alexis Orgera