

*Paul Bieg - Bk.
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Whispers

Teacher-poet doesn't expect reaction to his new book. "I write because I want to."

By **CONNIE RAE**
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"Publishing a book of poetry and waiting for a reaction is a bit like dropping a rose petal in water

and waiting for the splash," observes Paul Brown, a 30-year-old Cooksville history and sociology teacher at Central Peel secondary school in Brampton.

Brown has just had a book of poems called "Whispers" published by Three Trees Press of Toronto.

No one in Canada would go to the effort of having a poetry book published in hopes of financial gain. "You're doing very well if you sell 2,000 copies," he says.

So far 350 copies have been sold and there is the opportunity for small remuneration if it goes into hardcover, or over 500 copies, Brown says. But poetry is "in a sense like exotic food," he says. Not everyone has a taste for it.

People tend to relegate modern-day poets to the status of crank, he adds. They recall textbook drudgery instead of the joy of living or celebration

when they think of poetry, he says.

"I have no illusions of grandeur. I write poetry in the same manner that some people like to play baseball on Saturdays. It's not a life and death thing but I will continue to write because I want to," he says.

"I've always thought there was a certain mystique to being a writer and I've gravitated towards it," Brown says. Although he didn't attempt poetry until Grade 13, and there was never time in university or during the first "hectic, intense, mind-draining" years of teaching, he is now into his fourth year and there is more time and mental energy left. Any meaningful "chunk of time" such as March break or summer is spent bringing to life stored away memories.

Brown utilizes blank or free verse because he said it allows the greatest reign for expression.

He perceives his poetry as an "abstraction of painting" — perceiving what the artist sees but translating it into another visual dimension.

His poems deal with nature — the sea, rain and snow, the quiet of the

forest — the elements that "reflect the irony of man" and the frailties and strengths of human nature."

He is absorbed by it and sees nature as a mood-altering backdrop to human activities that define what humans do," he says. It's part of the human spirit — witness the upshoot in camping, he says.

Most poets today focus on interpersonal relationships, "an obsession with male-female relations" — it's sort of a nostalgia kick-back to Wordsworth and the romantic era, he says.

It's difficult to pioneer a new school of movement — "We've had enough of futuristic poetry" — and are now getting the Hallmark greeting card types, reflective of a hunger to return to the ideal relationship.

Contemporary music is waiting a breakthrough by some group with the stature of the Beatles and poetry is awaiting a similar breakthrough, Brown says.

"I'm afraid I'm not that innovative, but I'm awaiting someone who is, he adds.

Whispers is available for \$3.95.