

## **Author Questions & Answers**

Welcome!

Let's be honest, writing questions for yourself as an author is a dreary business. I got these ones from the internet. Let us find out if that helps...

J W Bowe

Q: What books have most influenced your life?

A: That's already a very big question; there's not even been an offer of a cup of tea yet. Off the top of my head it would be... The Earthsea Quartet, I Capture the Castle and Richard Pryor's autobiography, Pryor Convictions. Onwards!

Q: How do you develop your characters and plots?

A: Tend to them, make sure the soil is right. Probably I'd add some compost if it were an annual and I was wanting it to grow well in a border. After that let them grow and bend as they need to. Just look after them, enjoy them.

Q: We all need a hero! Tell us about your protagonist(s). Was there a real life inspiration behind him or her?

A: The forthcoming Derek Gainsborough autobiography, The Brine in Me... will feature some of those answers, of a fashion.

Q: Sci-fi fans love techno-porn! What real life science did you research for your book?

A: I'm not entirely sure what a techno-porn is. I'm going to assume that it is either a position or a device and ignore the answer altogether. I think that regards the research it became very important to me that it made sense in my own head. I was strict about that.

Q: What was the hardest part of writing this book?

A: Answering questions is suddenly ranking very high, and most of the answers are available by purchasing The Meifod Claw.

Q: What was your favourite chapter (or part) to write and why?

A: For me all the chapters are my little babies and they were all enjoyable to create, much like in real life.

Q: Did you learn anything from this book and what was it?

A: Keep your hand held out for the audience but remember that they probably already know more than you do.

Q: Is there a message in your novel that you hope readers will grasp?

A: Dowse for victory.

Q: What are your future projects?

A: The Brine in Me... (see previous description) and a series of plays called The Indented that is probably available for download on the Serious Biscuits website.

Also Metaphysical Top Trumps; category's include Ascendance, Passivity, Material Wealth, Special Move and Lizard Detection Sensitivity.

Q: If you couldn't be an author, what would an ideal career for you be?

A: Gardener, Freemason.

Q: What is your preferred method to have readers get in touch or follow you?

A: Please do not follow me, the chances are I'm just out for a wander.

Q: What were you like at school?

A: Penetrative for the exit.

Q: Were you good at English in School?

A: I attended Llanfyllin High School in Powys, so...

Q: What are your ambitions and expectations for your writing career?

A: I'll take yours, you have mine, and we'll call it even.

Q: Which writer inspires you?

A: Ursula Le Guin.

Q: So, what have you written?

A: I don't understand... you must already know that I've written The Meifod Claw, why else would we be here? Are you chatting me up?

Q: Where can we buy or see them?

A: I beg your pardon? I am working on the legality of using the likes of Sting and Noel Edmonds for Metaphysical Top Trumps. Available soon... else check your local classifieds and I'll sort something out and get them to you.

Q: Give us an insight to your main character. What does he/she do that is so special?

A: He maintains the stamina to dowse in spite of circumstance.

Q: What are you working on at the minute?

A: Answering Q&A's, listening to the Chris Robinson Brotherhood.

Q: What is it about?

A: Answering things, questions mostly. Also I'm not doing Chris Robinson's marketing work for him so you'll have to listen yourself and find out what that's about.

Q: What genre do your books fit into?

A: Grimoire, Sci-fi, Comedy, Quasi Autobiographies.

Q: What draws you to this genre?

A: Which of the above genre's? Probably with any of them it's playfulness or else a general disregard.

Q: Which actor/actress would you like to see playing the lead character from your most recent book?

A: Perhaps someone from a documentary? I always liked Buzz Aldrin but he's not worked for years. I don't even think he goes to tea parties anymore, and I've tried already to invite him before you have a go. Also don't send invites to the following because you will hear nothing back; Prince Philip, Bruce Grobelaar, Gary Busey, Oz Clarke.

Q: How much research do you do?

A: Always aim for nearly enough. Side note; you wouldn't believe how much goes into writing a novel that you can't claim back on tax.

Q: Have you written anything in collaboration with other writers?

A: Have you ever met the people that I know? The answer is no.

Q: What made you decide to collaborate and did that affect your sales?

A: See above.

Q: When did you decide to become a writer?

A: Probably sometime sat in The Triangle Inn at Lowestoft. You ever tried their Baltic Stout? Go and have a go on it if you have an afternoon spare. It will break you.

Q: Why do you write?

A: Steady on. Do you rubber neck when you pass an accident?

Q: What made you decide to sit down and actually start something?

A: I found that I could write while standing up. It makes all the difference and should be encouraged.

Q: Do you write full time?

A: As often as I can reasonably expect to get away with it.

Q: Do you have a specific time to write or how is your day structured?

A: Use what you have, get it while you can. I might like to save the denser stuff for the evening. Ideally I like to write in the morning, research things like duck hides and four cylinder engines in the afternoon, then back on the writing in the evening when everything closes in.

Q: Do you write everyday or as and when?

A: See above.

Q: Do you aim for a set amount of words per day?

A: It feels more like trying to hold the correct bearing than tearing out a wake for the finish.

Q: Do you write on a typewriter, computer, dictate or longhand?

A: Write it all up with a gel pen and then fire up the alternating current and type it all.

Q: Where do your ideas come from?

A: Listening, and paying attention when the moments require it. Or else pacing around and thinking on something else until counter intuition gets it's done.

Q: Do you work to an outline or plot or do you just prefer to see where things take you?

A: I like to sift through ideas, let it settle and then sprout where it needs to go. Perhaps take some cuttings. Sometimes I just like to sit in a wheelchair and become Derek, see where the wheels take me. I live up a hill.

Q: How do you think you've evolved creatively?

A: I've so far gotten to live longer than the year before it.

Q: What was the hardest part of writing your latest book?

A: Finding the re-fills on my gel pens... also naming the various ales. You don't want to upset heritage. Except that you do really; but you have to bide your time. Once I have a hop garden I'm going to create an entirely new mongrel form of hop called Viscosity. Heritage can swivel then! I would like to talk some more about hop gardens now if that's OK? Great! The problem we face is that we don't grow enough hops in Britain, hence the new populism of American and Australian hops. Those are fine hops, any way you mash em, but they're not home grown and even if they were they wouldn't be Viscosity. I think we all understand the issue now. Next time: how to hang your beer vines and what yield to expect from your first season. I'm only kidding, let's get back to business.

Q: What do you find is the easiest thing about writing?

A: Throwing it all to the wall and just making it up.

Q: How long on average does it take you to write a book?

A: Just the right amount of time, if you're as close to the process of writing my books as I am.

Q: Do you ever get writers block?

A: ...

Q: Any tips on how to get through the dreaded writers block?

A: Stand up and have a wander around in a garden, especially if its summer. Even if its winter the camellias might already be out. Go and check.

Q: What are your thoughts on writing a book series or sequel?

A: It's a good trade if you can keep it fresh. Perhaps I'm more drawn to taking other characters from a world that I've established and seeing where they take me, rather than a direct sequel. If you're offering me money then I can delete what I just said and get on with The Meifod Claws or something...

Q: Do you read much and who are your favourite authors?

A: I'm sure we've roughly covered that. Next!

Q: For your own reading, do you prefer ebooks or traditional paper/hard back books?

A: Hard and traditional. Unless it's a pamphlet. I do like a laminated menu as well, now that I come to think of it.

Q: What book are you reading at present?

A: Arcana Mundi and whatever Jeremy Clarkson is laying around closest to my lunch.

Q: Do you proof read/edit all your own books or do you get someone to do that for you?

A: Get someone else. Let them clean it up and be thankful while they do it.

Q: Do you let the book stew – leave it for a month and then come back to it to edit?

A: I like the whole process so I don't tend to leave it alone for too long.

Q: Who edited your book and how did you select them?

A: Katherine Trail. 'She makes your words sparkle'. True story, she's ace. A power behind the throne.

Q: Tell us about your cover and how it came about.

A: I designed it with my wife and my cover designer Kit Foster threw it out and made something better instead. Kinda like Henry Moore. Was he married?

Q: Do you think that the cover plays an important part in the buying process for the customer?

A: I think that we all know that it does.

Q: How are you choosing to publish this book ( e.g. Indie, traditional or both) and why?

A: I guess that until I'm not gardening part time its Indie all the way. Even then I don't think I'd like to give up the gardening completely. I'm probably willing to job share on a fortnightly basis.

Q: What would you say are the main advantages and disadvantages of self-publishing against being published or the other way around?

A: I'm never sure about the other way around... perhaps I'm just not inquisitive enough.

Q: How do you market your books?

A: Easy, you yell louder than the fruit and veg man over on the adjacent stall.

Q: Why did you choose this?

A: I have spare time on Wednesday's.

Q: Would you choose to or do you use a PR agency?

A: Like the ones in phone boxes on the far side of towns? I'm a married man, no thank you.

Q: Do you have advice for other authors on how to market their books?

A: Get yourself some tarpaulin or any other form of canvas for your market stall. It often rains.

Q: What part of your writing time do you devote to marketing your book?

A: I take that aforementioned Wednesday. Does answering questions count?

Q: What do you do to get book reviews?

A: Make up a name and write something very positive online, like everyone else does.

Q: How successful have your reviews been so far?

A: Very. The mountain almost literally comes to Mohammed when you start making them up for yourself.

Q: Do you have a strategy for finding reviewers?

A: Drugs. Or money. Or drugs and money. Only kidding, I'm not really sure what the best methods of coercion are. You just try and get somebody's attention and see if it leads to happy things.

Q: What are your thoughts on good and bad reviews?

A: Bad and good. Do you like the idea of someone you don't know telling you you're out of your depth? I know I do, but that's just me. What do you reckon?

Q: Any amusing story about marketing books that happened to you?

A: So you do like rubber necking... I knew it but I ain't got anything for you. Can I have another question about marketing please?

Q: What's your view on social media for marketing?

A: Thanks.

Q: Which social network worked best for you?

A: Bailey Head market, Oswestry. It's indoors you see, so no tarp or canvas. Also it must be benefits day or something when I go there because the public's pockets are full. At least every other Wednesday they are.

Q: Any tips on what to do and what not to do?

A: Nakedness as a stall owner is a no-no, it doesn't matter how many councillors you know. That said you can flirt with punters, but even then you need to know both yours, and the punters limits. You'll figure all this out as you go but its worth making clear.

Q: Did you do a press release to promote your work?

A: My wife does do flower pressing and that usually comes out pretty good. Do be careful when you laminate them and it should work fine.

Q: Did you get any interviews by local press/radio for your book launch?

A: Yeah I did get interviewed once, it wasn't by the press though and my alibi was solid.

Q: Is there any marketing technique you used that had an immediate impact on your sales figures?

A: I tried the nakedness mentioned above and that did have impacts. The council moved my stall. I'm upstairs in the corner now, two stalls along from the incense bunker.

Q: Did you make any marketing mistakes?

A: I'm pretty sure we just covered that.

Q: Why do you think that other well written books just don't sell?

A: So we are saying that my book is well written? Tidy!

Q: What do you think of 'trailers' for books?

A: I guess if it's a massive book then you might want to carry it around that way. Even then a pram would probably be more sensible.

Q: Do you have a trailer?

A: I do. It's got a high top cage around it so it's bang on the money for doing garden clearance in late autumn.

Q: Do you think that giving books away for free works and if so why?

A: Give and ye shall receive. Apparently, we'll see...

Q: In what formats is your book available?

A: All, including (at a substantial charge) me driving to your home and reading you The Meifod Claw aloud and unabridged.

Q: How do you relax?

A: Traditionally. You find what works.

Q: What is your favourite motivational phrase?

A: 'Desperation is a stinky cologne, John'

Q: What is your favourite positive saying?

A: 'Yes you're absolutely right, John...'

Q: What is your favourite novel and why?

A: Have we gone back around to the start again? I'm sure we've covered this but for the sake of it I'd guess it was Monkey. Punk Buddhism would be the why.

Q: What is your favourite quote?

A: The cheapest. What sort of question is that?

Q: What is your favourite film and why?

A: I can't shake The Big Lebowski from the top. Unless I'm with company and then The Cannonball Run is going on, no two ways about it.

Q: Where do you see yourself in five years time?

A: In a mirror? With my current prescription spectacles?

Q: What is your favourite movie and why?

A: No-ones memory is that short, I just told you.

Q: What advice would you give to your younger self?

A: I already know he's not going to listen.

Q: Which famous person, living or dead would you like to meet and why?

A: That's dead easy, Oz Clarke. Part mead, part monk... all funnier than anything that has ever been before. He's going to be impossible to beat in Meta Top Trumps. To even things out I'm inserting a rule that after he's been used twice you have to put him down and let him have a kip. While he's out of action either player is then allowed to play the Keith Floyd card.

Q: If you could have been the original author of any book, what would it have been?

A: Dan's Brown's ones. Just one book you say? Has he done an autobiography? No? Then I'd do that one for him.

Q: What advice would you give to aspiring authors?

A: Enjoy it. What else are you up to in the evenings anyway?

Q: Where do you see your publishing going in the future?

A: Off shore. Monaco looks sunny.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to add or comment on that I haven't included?

A: Who are you? I know I should have asked sooner, but... Hello?

Well I feel that went well. If you're still here, well done you. If not... well you know what you can do with yourself. Only kidding, let's all have a coffee and be friends. If you have any more names to go in Metaphysical Top Trumps, or you are serious about investing in a hop garden, feel free to get in touch.

By my tail... xx

J W Bowe