

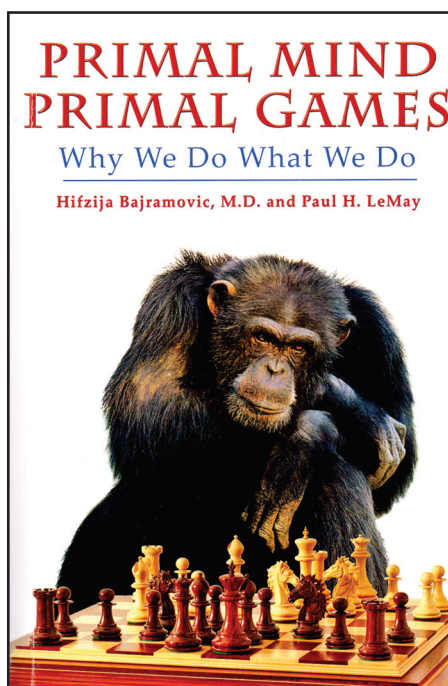
Primal Mind Primal Games: Ambitious but Important

A Book Review by Sam Margolis, Victoria

“I am in awe of people and always have been,” begins Hifzija Bajramovic, who, along with Paul H. LeMay, wrote *Primal Mind, Primal Games*. Indeed, the authors exude admiration and great hope for the potential of not merely the individual but humanity as a whole. The book’s subtitle, “Why We Do What We Do,” could just as easily be replaced with “Why We Could Do Better.”

Life presents an endless stream of challenges, the authors assert, and anyone who lives in Victoria or Vancouver amidst the current housing craze can attest. In the modern world and in the present location, we are confronted with attempting to rise above and not be numbed by the simplistic platitudes of corporate reality shows which pit “winners” versus “losers” or the “masters who don’t care” greed that has gripped pockets of southwest British Columbia during the current real estate hysteria. And the authors strive and succeed in providing mechanisms by which we can do so.

We start out with the three sorts of behaviour that are present in people to varying degrees: fighting, appeasing and assuming a posture to



denote defeat. Not all positions are black and white, and we may have bits and pieces of each within us. Moreover, these categories, and the subcategories therein, i.e., upper appeasing and lower fighting, are found not only in the individual but in the collective. The example of the former Yugoslavia is cited, a country which, following the Second World

War, transitioned from a defeatist mindset, to appeasing and then to fighting.

Though written by experienced experts in their field, this is far from an academic book, replete throughout with modern cultural references to help connect the behaviours – from Jack Nicholson films to Rolling Stones lyrics, from Malcolm Gladwell to the spine-tingling music from *Jaws*. Hence, it is a book that is very accessible to the lay reader.

Nonetheless, this is weighty stuff; the authors themselves recommend that book be read in stages. Our surroundings, the events which can suddenly be thrust upon us out of nowhere, our abilities to adjust to stress and to make sense of the world, are merely some of the challenges that make us such complex entities, and make the reader think how much further we need to go before we can fully understand human psychology. No surprise, then, that chess, the most intricate of games, is featured throughout in the imagery of the book.

The authors in the second half of the book bring up the message of slowing down, wanting to get off, trying to fathom and ultimately achieve

harmony in the all-too-perplexing universe in which we find ourselves. A westernized version of mindfulness is put forward as one means to achieve sanity and aspire to better things: I am here. I am now. I am.

Despite all the evidence before them, and the evidence that they themselves present – from the corporate mean-spiritedness personified by the televisual business superstars to the heinous dictators history – there is a constant sense of optimism within the pages. The authors, one surmises, had a lot of fun writing this book, and the reader, despite the seriousness and complexity contained between the covers, will find their enthusiasm infectious.



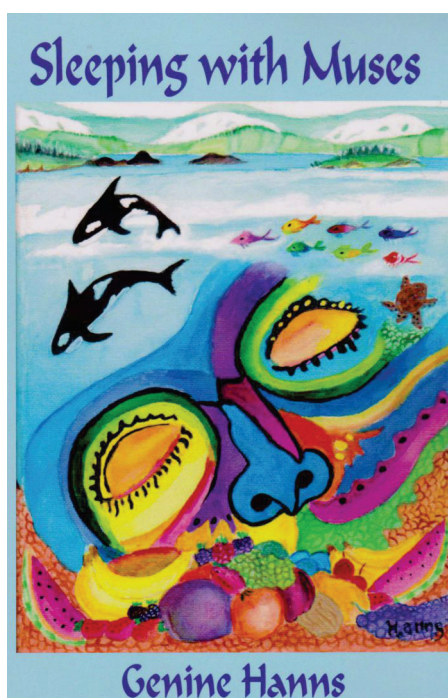
Poet has found faithful companions among muses

Sleeping with Muses by Genine Hanns, A Book Review by Adriana Mooney, Bridgeport

Edward Butscher, in Sylvia Plath’s autobiography *Method and Madness*, makes a startling comment about “the inevitable loneliness attendant upon anyone foolish enough to sleep with a muse.”

In Genine Hanns’ *Sleeping with Muses*, the reverse is true; she has found faithful companions amongst her muses. This 74-page book contains 48 poems besides her innovative and imaginative artwork that crowns the cover. She is blessed with a sensual writing style, an intelligent use of metaphor and a wonderful ear for internal rhyme. Her poems are grounded and earthy as she digs deep into the soul of each piece with rich colourful imagery that is both tactile and sensory.

Her main themes are erotica, humour, nature, love, loss and longing, myth, concern for the environment, compassion and respect for the creatures of this earth. The book begins with the concrete and erotic poem “Core Reaction” and ends with the titillating and humorous “A Poem in Burlesque.” A playful romp in the pastures of sexual creativity continues with “My Favourite Saying,” “Reflections on Peeling a Banana,” and “Nine Ways of



Looking at a Penis.” These poems are fun!

An exploration of myth in “Black Orpheus,” “Calypso’s Island,” plus the creation of myth in “The Merman,” and “Shi Rain,” shows her knowledge of Mythology. Her admiration for nature is respectfully displayed in “River Song,” “Cathedral Grove,” and

“Kwanatchay.” A spiritual connection between human and beast is celebrated in “A Deer at Dusk,” and “Through the Eyes of a Cat” as well as the cruelty we impose upon our creatures in “Jessica and the Black Swans.”

There are certain memorable lines that sink into my subconscious as I read this book. The bleak mood of isolation in “En Route to Westbank,” shows the poet’s struggle to breach the gap between Spirit and human when she says:

“...God no longer visits/only the poet’s soul.” In “Cutting Away,” the shards of a lost relationship speak longingly: “Our words are lost stories; severed from anchors of the sea.” Her ghazal, “Portrait of Rio de Janeiro,” concerns itself deeply with environmental damage: “A species of tropical bird is dying/A rainbow fades on oil magnate sands,” and also in “Dreamstate,” with “palms blasted with chemical spray/and poisonous fruits, well laden.” “Tidebreak” speaks of our possible economical demise when: “...cities rise and fall/under the power of gain and greed.”

“Twelve Ways of Looking at a Hummingbird,” is largely

philosophical as in: “VI: A hummingbird lifts/from moment to moment/joining time to time,” and “IX: “When learning patience and silence/listen for the hummingbird/lighting on her flowery bough.” An economy of words creates a distinct water metaphor in “She is Rain,” with: “this summer drenched afternoon/I keep in a rain barrel.”

“Poem for a Winter Love,” describes a snow crystal as: “a seven-sided shape against my palm./Inside, a universe of its own.” The spoken connects to the tactile once again in “The Sound of Feathers;” with “down” a double entendre: “Each word of yours is a sweet bed/I lie down in.” This is her trademark; unique, intelligent and powerful imagery.

Genine Hanns has written four books, *Cross-Eyed Virgin on a Tighrope*, *The Language of Water*, her novel *Innocent Origins of Sorrow*, and *Sacred Journeys*, her book of angel poetry. A Retrospect on these works is in order, and hopefully will appear in a subsequent edition of ICN. For an in-depth description of her writing and art, visit her at www.wix.com/gkhanns.

Adriana Mooney is a Photographer and Writer living in Bridgeport, B.C.