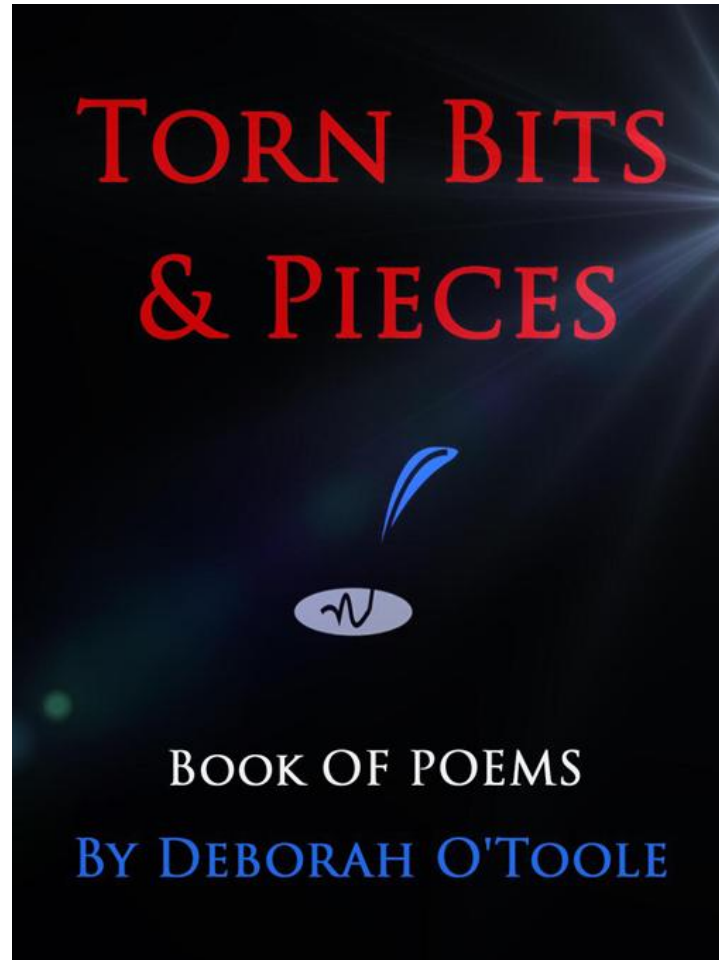


Questions & Answers about:

Torn Bits & Pieces

By Deborah O'Toole



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ISBN: 978-1-3108-3464-6

ABOUT "TORN BITS & PIECES"

Torn Bits & Pieces is a collection of forty-five poems written by Deborah O'Toole between 1978 and 2014.

From the author:

"I've never thought of myself as a poet. I'm a fiction writer, first and foremost. I'm not one to follow guidelines well, so the particulars and accepted standards of poetry never appealed to me. However, there was a period between 1978 and 1982 when I churned out quite a few poems. I shelved them for a number of years, being of the opinion that the collective verses were nothing more than the ramblings of an angst-ridden youth. My thoughts were very dark in those days."

"Torn Bits & Pieces" includes *Black Eyes*, *Collective Obsessions* (poetic rendering based on the same-named fictional saga), *Confusion & Mr. Barrett*, *Dark Blue Moon*, *Drama*, *Edward*, *Gentle Creatures*, *In the Town in the Time*, *Intoxication*, *Moonstruck Madness*, *My Name is Called Disturbance*, *Religion*, *Sad Passing* (personal tribute to John Lennon), *Siembamba*, *Silver Lining*, *Striking with a Spirit's Knife*, *The Spell*, *Year of Blood*, *You're Just a Boy* and many more.

For more, go to:

<http://deborahotoole.com/>

The following is a general "Question & Answer" session about *Torn Bits & Pieces* (book of poems) by Deborah O'Toole.

Is "Torn Bits & Pieces" a one-off, or do you write poetry on a regular basis?

I've never thought of myself as a poet. I'm a fiction writer, first and foremost. I'm not one to follow guidelines very well, so the particulars and accepted standards of poetry never appealed to me.

When did you write the poems included in "Torn Bits & Pieces"?

There was a period between 1978 and 1982 when I churned out quite a few poems. I shelved them for a number of years, being of the opinion that the collective verses were nothing more than the ramblings of an angst-ridden youth. My thoughts were very dark in those days.

You wrote most of the poems during your late teens and early twenties?

Yes, from the age of seventeen to twenty-one. The odd thing is, I have no idea why I began writing poems in the first place nor why the urge stopped. I've written the odd ditty here and there in ending a fiction novel, but nothing quite like I churned out as a teenager.

I think everyone's teenage years are difficult in terms of emotional turmoil and insecurity. We might have hard times as adults, but the ability to deal with situations and learning how to compartmentalize feelings is at its lowest ebb when we're teens.

What made you decide to re-assemble the poems and release them in the form of "Torn Bits & Pieces"?

I found the long-forgotten collection last year (2009). All the poems were written in long-hand and located in an old dust-encrusted journal. I re-read a few of them and thought to myself: "Why not?" Why not set them out for the whole world to see?

I'm not ashamed of the work, but I certainly don't consider the poems to be polished or brilliant by any stretch of the imagination. They just happen to relate the inner turmoil I felt as a teenager. I guess writing poems was my way of dealing with typical growing pains.

One particular poem, called "Sad Passing," talks about the death of John Lennon. When did you write it, and why?

I wrote it a few months after Lennon was killed in New York City. I always liked his music, much more so than any other solo endeavor undertaken by former members of the Beatles. His death was quite a shock to me at the time.

I was too young to comprehend the initial Beatles explosion. I discovered their music nearly a decade after they disbanded, and John Lennon was my favorite from the start. He was an icon, a musical genius.

"Sad Passing" is basically very simple, but it expressed my feelings at the time.

What is "Dark Blue Moon" about?

I'm one of those people who likes windy, rainy and cold weather. I feel invigorated when storm clouds gather. I feel alive when the wind whips through my hair, and I feel tranquil when I hear rain hitting the roof. I've had those same feelings nearly my entire life. On the flip side, glaring sun, sandy beaches and heat sap my energy and take away my creative inspiration. In frank terms, sunny weather turns me into a morose, tetchy bitch.

"Dark Blue Moon" exemplifies those atypical feelings in a nutshell. I wrote the poem when I was seventeen, and nothing has changed. I still like cold, rainy weather.

What about "Drama"?

A few of my lifelong pet peeves include racial or religious bigotry, and cruelty to animals. Nothing will incense me faster than prejudice in general, or abuse of animals. I just can't tolerate either one.

Also on the top of my list is the inherent hypocrisy in certain people. You know, those who pretend to be something they're not. We all know someone like that. I used to have a friend who put herself in debt to lease a Mercedes-Benz just so people would think she was swimming in money. How ridiculous is that? We all have to bolster our sense of self on occasion, but there has to be a limit.

"Drama" is just an extension of my feelings in the matter.

Do you have any advice to offer aspiring poets?

I'm not qualified to offer advice on poetry-writing, frankly. My "poetry" does not follow the standards in assembly by any measure. I have not sought advice or censure from professional poets, nor have I tidied the language contained in "Torn Bits & Pieces."

No, my work in "Torn Bits & Pieces" does not follow the well-known standards of prose. It's just what it is, without apology and without a false sense of ego or entitlement.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Deborah O'Toole is the author of *Celtic Remnants*, a novel of enduring yet impossible love and betrayal set in the turbulence of Ireland, glamour of London and the wilds of Scotland. She is also author of the mystery/suspense novel *Mind Sweeper* and the gothic fiction novel *Glinhaven*.

In addition, she writes short-story Juvenile Fiction (*Short Tales Collection*) and darkly abstract Poetry, and is the author of a series of historical essays, articles and book reviews for *Ambermont Magazine* and *Class Notes*.

Writing as Deidre Dalton, Deborah is author of the "Collective Obsessions Saga," which chronicles the extraordinary loves and dark obsessions between two families sweeping a span of more than one hundred years, all set against the backdrop of a magnificent seaside mansion in Maine. Books in the eight-part family saga include *The Advent*, *Quixotic Crossings*, *The Twain Shall Meet*, *Enthrallment*, *The Keeper's Journal*, *Hearts Desires*, *The Twilight* and *Megan's Legacy*.

Also writing as Deidre Dalton, she is author of the "Bloodline Trilogy," which follows the mysterious and magical journey of one family through time. Books in the trilogy include *Bloodfrost*, *Bloodlust* and *Blood & Soul*.

Using the pseudonym Shenanchie O'Toole, she also writes for the cooking/recipe web site Food Fare. She is writer and co-editor of the *Ambrosia Cookbook*, *Community Garden Cookbook*, *Food Fare Cookbook*, *Furry Friends Cookbook*, *Larkin Community Cookbook*, *Recipes-on-a-Budget Cookbook* and the *Soups & Stews Cookbook*, along with more than forty titles in the *Food Fare Culinary Collection*.



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