



When Poetry Attacks

by Anna T. Hirsh

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Today I got up and had to pee,
It was really yellow because I drank last night.
I am famous and so are my friends.

This is not a poem.

What if I told you that Michael Madsen, the fabulous Mr. Blonde from Reservoir Dogs, wrote it? He didn't, because I'm not allowed to reprint his work. But it's a dead ringer for the hundreds of "poems" that fill 465 pages of the first volume of his poetry.

As an English Major, I was taught that poetry was more than chopping words into iambic pentameter or stamping them into the form of a Haiku. Poetry is not simply the automatic opposite of words that aren't prose. But riddle me this: Is writing down the self-indulgent, self-centered, gross, stupid, and name-dropping blather that flits through your mind, actually poetry if you happen to be famous?

Maybe it's just really F'n bad poetry.

People should have been paid to listen to it live at Mr. Madsen's book release party/Food Network filming that took place in Hollywood at the end of July. Luckily I was.

I am a VIP server/"But Really I'm a Writer" at a ridiculous Hollywood nightclub. We also do numerous special events, including premieres, awards, television shows, and book release parties. I have taken care of Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt, Chaka Khan, Luke and Owen Wilson, Suge Knight, David Lee Roth, Tom Cruise and more. This party was seriously one of the worst.

The premise was a lavish extravaganza eight-course meal for Mr. Madsen and a hundred and fifty of his closest friends/pompous B-listers. The whole event was also being filmed for a Food Network program about how major Hollywood parties are orchestrated. As I was putting river rocks on napkins to create "mood," I watched the Food Network host repeatedly flash a sparkling smile and say with emotion, "You can feel the energy." Apparently she was having a hard time getting the take right. I'm not surprised; I also would have a hard time telling a camera, with a straight face, that everyone was frenzied about Michael Madsen's happiness. If she was picking up on any energy, it was the fact that all us workers were pissed off. We had just found out that the party was almost twelve hours long.

Twelve hours. And it didn't help that time passed at the same speed that it does during an eighth grade algebra class, last period, in June. In the first hours guests kept coming up to us and angrily asking when they were going to eat, as if it were somehow up to us

and we really just wanted to prolong this awesome experience. We had to wait until after Madsen spoke, but first we had to serve him a tank of vodka-cranberry. And it just got better.

I stood in the VIP room while Madsen read selected pieces from his work. Madsen would read, give his trademark squinty smile, and then giggle at himself, as if to say, "I love me." At first I wanted to laugh, but after a piece about Dennis Hopper in which he did a free-flow word association including words like "tits, blow, movies," I wanted to shove an ice-pick through my head. It was only made bearable by the fact that some of the guests sitting next to me were pretending to slit their wrists.

The following dinner took approximately four hours. Half the guests had left by the third course. The Food Network show was on the opposite side of the club filming a dinner that had nothing to do with the reality of what was going on at the party. In television and celebrity, all is not as it seems... I think Madsen allowed them to interview him only once. He had tucked himself into a corner seat where I couldn't reach his dishes without crushing his guests at the table. I tried to make jokes about the fact that he, the guest of honor, had to hand me his plates, but he just looked at me in way that suggested I was deformed or grotesque.

I'm guessing Mr. Madsen was probably just drunk, but he does win the award for having the biggest A-hole of a guest: David Carradine. It is difficult to imagine a human being who loves himself more than this man does. I wanted to personally kill Bill. Hahhhh...

When I asked Mr. Carradine what he wanted to drink, he pointedly ignored me. Even the person he was talking to looked at me, looked at him, looked at me, and seemed embarrassed. I simply said, "Okayyyyyyy..." as loudly as I could and walked away. Two minutes later Mr. Carradine told a manager to tell me to get him a drink. I continued to take care of him throughout his meal, but he never once looked at me. He would simply bend to and fro as if a magical wind was actually tending to his needs.

However, none of that rudeness compares to when the gentleman running the party was doing his schpeel and checking in with the table, on camera, to make sure all was well. Mr. Carradine loudly told him to "Shut the F*** up." That's right, sir, make the little people feel worthless.

Shortly after, Mr. Carradine himself began reading poems from Madsen's book to the small group of uber-VIPs at their table. People started crying. All us workers wanted to throw the river rocks at them. I think that if these people could masturbate each other in public, they would.

Speaking of the rocks, I suppose one of the bigger highlights of my night was watching Mr. Carradine subtly pocket them. He was handling them delicately as if they were precious, something worthy of stealing. They were out of a giant plastic sack from Home Depot. Again, all is not as it seems.

At the end of the party, everyone received a gift bag including their very own copy of "The Complete Poetic Works of Michael Madsen Vol. I: 1995-2005." I got one of the books, and I plan to use it for evil. I think the guests also got a mug. I am seriously jealous.

The show finally aired in December. After the great gods of television were done with it, Madsen's party looked nothing like the real experience—it seemed almost cool. The producers of the show were smart enough to nix the scenes of Madsen reading his poesy.

But I was there. I know the truth. And now, sitting at home, smug and unpublished, I entertain my friends with readings from the book and imitations of Darth Carradine.

I will write my moral of this story of poetry and celebrity in the form of a limerick

Mike M. the poet, Dave C. the old coot,
Their own horns they sure liked to toot.
"Gosh, I love me!"
The two thought with glee,
Until God blessed us by making them mute.