

# SLWG Spotlight: *We're pleased to present...*

## Demian Farnworth



**Poet, Writer, Keynote Blogger**

**SLWG Member Since 2006**

### **Early Life**

Demian Farnworth was born on October 29, 1972 at 7:31 a.m., just outside a white Dodge van.

His father, Todd James, forgot to fill up the tank the night before, so they coasted into the hospital parking lot on fumes.

This didn't help Jane Beth Ann's, Demian's mother, stress level. In a manic state, she screamed for a first name.

"Demian. Remember, we're naming him Demian Joseph," Todd said, lugging his wife into the hospital.

Demian is the name of a novel by German author Herman Hesse. It's about a young man, accompanied by his mysterious classmate Max Demian, who descends from and revolts against the superficial ideals of this world, eventually awakening into a realization of self.

In context, somewhat appropriate to how Demian Farnworth's life has played out.

### **Tragedy in the Grand Tetons**

In July of 1997, during a rock climbing trip in the Grand Tetons, Demian Farnworth watched his step-father plunge 200 feet to his death.

With his back to the cliff wall, looking up, Demian asked his other partner who was forty feet above, "Did John just fall?"

"Yes, he did."

For the next three hours Demian and his partner rappelled down the wet cliff face in the Grand Tetons. Naturally it was very dangerous. And in order to safely descend they had to leave equipment in the cliff and cut the rope for each descent. By the time they reached the bottom, their 150 foot rope measured under 40 feet.

Demian's girlfriend at the time, Angie Stika, was back at camp during this time, having skipped that days climbing due to exhaustion and illness. About midway through the tragedy park rangers informed Angie that someone had fallen to their death, but didn't know who at that point. Angie was in a panic.

Demian was in a panic, too, but trying to stay calm. The entire time he descended he worked out a deal with God: "Get me out of here alive, and I'll straighten out my life, get serious with Angie and go to school."

And within two weeks of the accident, Demian proposed to Angie.

Demian entered SIUE in the Fall semester of 1998 to study literature and poetry, four months after he married Angie. He graduated in 2000.

In 2001 Angie gave birth to Sophia. In 2002 Demian and his family moved to Fairview Heights where his son, Sebastian, was born.

## **A Hang Up with the Human Condition**

His first job out of college was as a copywriter for a nonprofit. Strongly dissatisfied by their micro-management style, within 14 months he went to write for a small company, Proquest Technologies, as a direct response copywriter, and went head over heels for marketing.

In his five years with Proquest Technologies as Senior Copywriter, Demian specialized in online copywriting and marketing, moderating and networking with blogs. He also wrote PR articles, trade journal pieces, sales letters, two real estate related books in the business parable style [think *The One-Minute Manager*, but better], online banners, text ads, landing pages and emails.

He even served in management. Somewhat unsuccessfully he claims.

During his ten-month tenure as Marketing Manager for Proquest Technologies he built and managed an SEO program, negotiated online ad buys, planned and analysed marketing plans. In addition he participated in executive team training and developed a good head for web usability, business and marketing strategy, business planning and growth.

"But I got demoted. Said I wasn't getting demoted. Just wanted somebody else to do my job."

In a nutshell, Proquest Technologies wanted a *numbers guy*.

This demotion, however, turned out to be a blessing: "Screwed my head back on. I'd sacrificed fiction for so long."

He confesses he's got a hunger for human psychology. This explains his love for literature, history, economics, negotiations and marketing.

"They all deal with the human condition."

In July 2007 Joyce Meyer Ministries recruited Demian as their Senior Web Writer.

## **Odd Literary Influences**

During his Senior year at SIUE, Demian won two regional essay awards and published one poem. In 2002 he won the St. Louis Wednesday's Club Annual Poetry contest with "The Poem of Bare Princess."

It's ironic that this award came after he started working for Proquest Technologies in 2002 and started to develop a direct response copywriter: this job had cured him of ever wanting to write poetry again.

"It taught me how to care about the reader, which meant to write clearly." Demian said. "And the poetry I was writing at that time wasn't clear to my readers, my wife, me."

Shortly after 2002 he picked up fiction, starting a novel. "Not having a clue about what I was doing, it was a really bad novel."

In January 2006 he started work on a second novel. He intends to shop it to agents by the end of December 2007.

Throughout 2007 he also wrote and published two short stories, "[Lubo](http://www.pindeldyboz.com/dflubo.htm)" [click through to <http://www.pindeldyboz.com/dflubo.htm>] and "[A Narrow Mind Outside Dutchtown, MO.](http://www.opiummagazine.com/Index.aspx?storyid=449)" [click through to <http://www.opiummagazine.com/Index.aspx?storyid=449>]

"I'm not there, but I'm getting my head around how to write a story. Working on short stories has helped the novel. I should have started the short stories first. I got it backwards. But that's what you get when you're impatient, egotistical, hard-headed."

When asked who he considers his biggest literary influences, Demian names two people immediately: the early Twentieth Century painter and sculptor, Marcel Duchamp and contemporary electro musician Richard D. James.

"Marcel...I guess because he turned his back on art early in his career. His concern was for 'not repeating himself.' Concern for purity of art so strong, I guess. But he was never serious. Took it lightly. I like that."

Richard James shares the same attitude. "He claims he doesn't listen to contemporary musicians. Shuns them. Does his own thing. He's lying. But I like that."

When pushed he admitted he thinks about Thomas Pynchon a lot, but wouldn't say he was his favorite writer.

## **Keynote Blogger at St. Louis Writers Guild**

Demian admits he's cut himself an occupational niche as a blogger.

"Not planned. Just looked up and noticed I'd been doing it successfully. Had a head for it."

In the past he maintained a marketing advice blog called "Monster Copy" and chronicled his difficulties with his first novel with another blog. Currently he maintains his own microblog at Twitter.

Outside of fiction he still moonlights with Proquest Technology as their blogger. He researches, writes and moderates blog content for their real estate marketing blog. In addition he creates relationships with other real estate bloggers.

"I like influencing people. I guess I like the idea of people following me."

Based on his experience, in September of 2007 St. Louis Writers Guild's Robin Theiss invited Demian to write for their keynote blog, *Eliot*.

The best is still to come.

## **A Sample of Demian's Poetry**

### **Poem of the Bare Princess**

I love her pure disregard for body,

her inebriation with wasted limbs,  
lips like sticks, the pollen of butterfly.

Cranberries swarm her heels as undergrowth.  
Without motion she can depart from her pillow.  
I adore her pure disregard for body,

her hatred for mass, her hatred for clothes.  
I adore her fondness for diminished being,  
her devotion to her bodied catacomb.

On the tile of her slender recesses,  
like a balsam whose fragrance  
slowly fades, she hides behind the curtain of her being.

I am dazzled by her clear neglect of body.  
Like autumn, she agonizes beautifully.

Demian Farnworth