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# Passion for poetry: Thompson releases second collection of works

By Freddie Bourne Messenger-Inquirer

Sep 5, 2024

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Christa Thompson, who writes under the name Christa Elise, talks about her r office on Wednesday.

Photo by Greg Eans, Messenger-Inquirer | [geans@messenger-inquirer.com](mailto:geans@messenger-inquirer.com)

Owensboro resident Christa Thompson found herself to be an “introverted kid” but discovered solace in writing as a hobby.

“... I would just write little stories here and there, sometimes poetry,” she said.

Originally from Wilmington, North Carolina, the now 21-year old Thompson, who goes under the pen name Christa Elise, ended up getting into the latter because of her father at about the age of 9.

“While (my dad) was pursuing grad school, (he) began writing and he actually published two fantasy books during my childhood,” she said. “He inspired me to publish; but ... also along this time, he would give me pieces of poetry from Edgar Allan Poe and some other famous poets and he ... would have me memorize them.

“He would give me like a week to memorize it, and after that week he would ask me to recite it from memory and what I thought the meaning of it was,” Thompson said. “I remember that being a very big part of my journey through writing just because as a kid (trying) to understand what these metaphors and analogies meant.”

From there, the idea of being a published author became “a distant dream,” Thompson said, but that it wasn’t until her later teenage years that she wanted to take seriously.

“Throughout my adolescence and early teens, I continued to just write and kind of just do it for fun,” she said, “but it wasn’t until I was probably around 17 or 18 that I was really struggling to find the courage and the mental space to fully write a book.

“ ... It wasn’t until that time of my life that I kind of was like, ‘I’m just gonna go for it. I’m going to do it.’ ”

It was during high school when Thompson started delving into material with more depth and substance in what to write after taking a poetry class.

“We were encouraged to write a poem and bring it to class to share it with everyone,” she said. “That was my opportunity (where) I kind of spoke about deeper issues that I do write about in my books. ... That class helped me to explore that a little bit ....”

Thompson, who moved to Owensboro about seven years ago, went off to Western Kentucky University. Though she had a passion for writing, Thompson took a different route and studied psychology — which she found had gone somewhat hand-in-hand.

“... It sort of, in a way, went along with what I was doing,” she said. “You study a lot of behaviors and trauma, so that did ... engage my interest in this.”

One of her goals in writing, Thompson said, was to publish her first book before turning 20.

She achieved that feat one year earlier, releasing her first poetry collection, “The Honey in the Hive,” in 2023 that includes subject matter such as death, grief, loss and life. The

pieces were written throughout Thompson's high school career.

"... I think my push was that I was experiencing a lot of new changes and I was in a lot of spaces and experiences where I was very alone," Thompson said. "... I was a very young adult — trying to understand and cope with everything.

"I started going to therapy and I was in this space where I had to kind of confront and understand everything once you're finally out of the house (and) on your own," Thompson said. "... You learn more about yourself."

However, Thompson finds her first effort was "... just skimming the surface of ... deeper, raw emotions and experiences."

At the end of August, Thompson released her second poetry book, "Even When the Lights Are On," in an effort to dive deeper with new poems that she wrote over the course of the last year.

"... I struggled with a lot in my childhood, (so) it was me finally feeling capable and feeling confident in overcoming those childhood demons," she said. "... It felt like revenge in a way, because I do speak a lot about abuse (throughout that time), and it was kind of like me wanting to ... not let them win.

"... I felt like I couldn't move forward if I kept looking behind me."

While Thompson works full-time as a registered behavior technician, she recently began making author appearances. Her in-person debut took place back in July at the Adult Book Fair at The Brew Bridge where she sold copies of her first book within an hour.

She was asked back to the second fair on Oct. 27 — now with two books in hand.

Thompson finds the experience of her dream coming to fruition is “very surreal.”

“I will say that I deal with imposter syndrome every single day. ... (At) the first book fair, it was so weird to have people ask me to sign their books,” she said, “... and I post a lot of poetry on TikTok ... (and) I have almost 1,000 followers now. ... It’s such a weird feeling that there’s 1,000 people watching me read poetry ....”

For Thompson, she said she appreciates the vulnerability of poetry without saying too much.

“... I always just adored the way that you could create such a short story or just create and talk about something so deep, so raw in such a short couple of sentences,” she said. “... I ... dealt with a lot in my childhood and I was ready to talk about that with people and not just keep it inside.

“I found poetry to be that medium for me where ... I (could) open up a bit more ....”

And Thompson hopes those who read her newest book will feel comfort in some way.

“I just want them to take away that they aren’t alone, and I think that’s just such a recurring issue that everyone experiences — you get trapped in your own feelings, your own experiences and think that you’re the only one that knows how to deal with this,” she said. “... I hope that they just take away that there’s always people that are out there who are willing to leave the light on for you, who are willing to be there and can understand and be there.”

“Even When the Lights Are On” is available now on Amazon.

For more information, [linktr.ee/TheChristaElise](https://linktr.ee/TheChristaElise).

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**F Bourne**