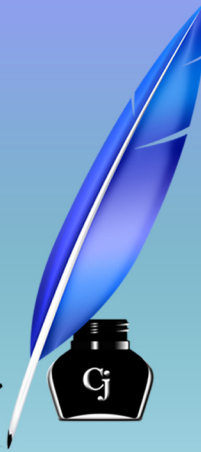


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Interview with Uvi Poznansky Author of *Apart From Love, A Favorite Son, and Home*

Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Your story is extremely rich in detail and in content. Where does one learn to write like that?

Writers that captivate you have a way with the pen, they can sweep you off your feet and into the page, into the story, to a different time and place. So, how do we do it? Like Yogi Berra used to say, you can see a lot just by looking. For example, when Anita stands on the Santa Monica pier, and spots her husband out there, in a sea-food restaurant, with another woman--you can be sure that I have studied every detail about the restaurant--especially the menu--by going online and selecting the dishes Anita might wish to remember. Here is her voice:

"I could see the slice of lime on the lip of his glass, and closed my eyes—but still, was blocked from smelling it.

I tried, in vain, to bring back the touch of salt around the rim, and the scent of butter on mashed potatoes, and the meaty flavor of wild mushrooms, and the pleasure you get with every gulp of hot, thick clam chowder. I could almost lick the spoon, and pinch the bread, and wipe the bowl with it, 'cause I had known all that. Me, I had been there with him, like, a lifetime ago."

Your characters seem to come to life on the page; they capture us with the anguish and heartbreak of real life. As a writer, how did you get to know your characters: Lenny, Ben, Anita and Natasha?

The characters sprung to life so vividly because they were living in my head for a whole year. The story is told from two points of view, Ben's and Anita's, which gave me an opportunity to illustrate how the same events, seen from different angles and through difference experiences in life, are interpreted in an entirely different way.

Anita, the girl in the center of this whirlwind of passion in *Apart From Love*, had to become a sharp contrast to both Lenny and his son, Ben. Unlike their refined, learned grammar, hers is utterly atrocious... I couldn't just drop in a double negative here and there, so I dropped it in quite liberally... I threw in the word 'like' in every one of her paragraphs, just for good measure, and had wicked fun with the way she talks!

Natasha, Ben's mother in my novel *Apart From Love*, has few lines of dialogue--and yet she leaves a profound, sometimes troubling affect on the other characters. When she appears in the story, it is to mark the distance between what she is and what she used to be, a distance that is

expanding in time. Her first line of dialogue, when she asks her husband, "Are you having a thing again," can give you the first inkling you get that words started to escape her.

Music plays a part in your story. Do you listen to music while you write? Where do you go to write?

When I start writing I jot little notes to myself where ever inspiration strikes. But as I go deeper into the writing process, I find myself at home, with my laptop, and the hours fly by. I start early morning, and after what seems like a minute, I realize it's already time for dinner!

In *Apart From Love*, I introduced a white piano into the story. The mere presence of this instrument in Ben's apartment suggested a variety of scenes, such as the musical duet in chapter 18. Now, how would you go about writing a duet, when your knowledge about playing the piano is nothing but a faint memory from the age of six? I found several ways of learning the intricate details. I watched numerous videos of playing a duet on the piano, studied every note of how to play 'The entertainer' --and as a result, wrote this. Here is Ben's voice:

"And before this phrase fades out Anita straightens her back, and places her hand on the keys. Then, to my astonishment, she plays the next phrase of music, this time with raw, intense force, which I never knew existed in her, bringing it to the verge of destruction, making it explode all around me. And I, in turn, explode with the following one, because how can I let her outdo me? I am, after all, The Entertainer..."

Alzheimers certainly plays a critical role in your novel. Can you tell us about any personal experiences or research that you did to bring this subject into your story?

I knew the impact of Alzheimer's, of how it robs the patients mind and leave a shell behind, from watching the last year of my father's life, and also from visiting patients in a home--but in addition, I did extensive research about how it is diagnosed, how do you solve the problem of placing a loved one at such a home, and the emotional roller-coaster ride of blame and guilt that takes place in a family. I even looked up medical analysis of brain images, which allowed me to write this about Natasha:

"The doctors, they point out the overall loss of brain tissue, the enlargement of the ventricles, the abnormal clusters between nerve cells, some of which are already dying, shrouded eerily by a net of frayed, twisted strands. They tell her about the shriveling of the cortex, which controls brain functions such as remembering and planning.

And that is the moment when in a flash, mom can see clearly, in all shades of gray blooming there, on that image, how it happens, how her past and her future are slowly, irreversibly being wiped away—until she is a woman, forgotten."

You had a very unique way of telling the story in *Apart From Love*. Can you tell us about the decision process that was involved when you first thought of how you would write it?

In any task you undertake, you often hear the advice: start at the beginning, continue down the middle, and finish at the end. Writing is no different. Problem is, as you advance diligently down that path, you may find--to your surprise--that you are getting better, more proficient at your craft. Suddenly the opening of this chapter sounds so much catchier than the previous one; and the ending more powerful. Which requires constant re-evaluation and reworking of previous chapters. So in my opinion, the process of writing is Cyclical. By the time I completed the last chapter of [*Apart From Love*](#), I knew I had to discard--or at least, restructure--the first chapter.

The story gained speed and purpose when right in the middle of writing it I stopped, and turned to write the last chapter, called 'Editorial Notes' which is appended at the end. In this chapter, a character called Mr. Bliss comes to visit the Santa Monica Apartment after Ben and Anita have left the place for good. The description given by Mr. Bliss provided the 'stage set' for the last scene: the white piano is gone, and the mirror lies broken on the bedroom floor. How would these things happen? I did not know yet, but now I had the end waiting for me.

We also have learned that you have been an artist, architect, poet and software engineer. How has these other careers influenced your novel writing?

Being an artist is tightly-coupled with the way I see the world, and the way I write. One of the reviewers of *Apart From Love* wrote this about me: "Uvi starts with a clean canvas and dabs a little paint here and a little paint there as she develops her characters and creates her masterpiece. Her strokes then become broader, more passionate, more vivid and vibrant as she continues to let her characters' stories unfold. She draws you in to a deeper level than you might actually want to go as she ignites the fire to your own love, passions, and fears."

Through the use of rhyme and rhythm, the words in poetry become overlaid with meanings, and so they impact you, they evoke feelings and thoughts. Which is what I bring from my poetry into my prose, into *Apart from love*. I listen for the rhythm of speech, the way we all stumble over our words when overcome by emotions, and then, I write the dialog in *Apart From Love* in the voice of my characters, in the rhythm of their breathing.

Now my previous reincarnations--my master degree in Architecture, my master degree in Computer science, and the work experience in both fields, are invaluable to me when writing. For example, as a software engineer I developed software for medical devices, including ultrasound machine. Which allowed me now to write the scene with Anita watching the ultrasound image of her baby:

“With a soft, squelching sound, little specs glitter in the dark fluid. And there—just behind them specs—something moves! Something catches the light and like, wow! For a second there I can swear I see a hand: My baby’s hand waving, then turning to float away.

This isn’t exactly what I’ve expected, ‘cause like, not only is that fluid kinda see-through—but to my surprise, so is the little hand. Like, you can spot not only the faint outline of flesh on them, but the shine of the bones coming at you, too.”

Did you have any challenges or experiences in the publishing phase of producing *Apart From Love*– and what advice would you like to pass along to our readers?

Publishing is one challenge after another! Never a dull moment! To be an Indie author and publisher, you must thrive on problem solving--or else, go the traditional publishing route. To give you but one aspect of publishing, lets talk about the cover design, which I take with the utmost seriousness. It gives a face to my story, and must express it faithfully, in graphical terms. In my mind, when you take my book into your arms, you must be rewarded by holding a work of art. This reward starts with the cover, which opens the door--literally and figuratively--and sweeps you, page after page, into a different world. It continues with an appealing layout of the interior pages, and culminates with the story.

So in the case of the front cover of *Apart From Love*, I designed it based on my own oil painting. I offer it to your interpretation, if the figure on the cover is dancing out of joy, or else, in sheer frustration, getting herself tied in the red fabric... I likened this fabric to chewing gum, into which you step and can never release yourself. The more you fight to free yourself, the more you become entangled.

Shimmering luster, let me try, let me reach you...
Layers beyond layers of red, all aglow With
trembling fingers I touch... Flimsy tissue It
comes down upon me, folding high into low

I dance with abandon, with no inhibition..
Entangled in fabric, I can no longer flee
Can't breath, for now I can see the strange fusion...
Now I know: this tissue is me

Where does the title: *Apart From Love* come from and what does love mean to you?

The word Love is used sparingly in the novel. It is so rare that when it is finally uttered, its power is overwhelming. The theme of the book is the fear we all have, men and women alike: the fear of coming out to the open with our most intimate feelings, and risking rejection and pain.

"I cannot make up my mind whether it has been a mistake, I mean, just standing there in confusion, facing her, saying nothing—when in fact, in spite of what she may think, I had it: really, I had the words right there, at the tip of my tongue, to tell Anita how desperately I want her.

There is no need, no need, no need to torture myself. This woman is not for me. No, I repeat, not for me. I am lucky, so lucky I have managed restrain myself, somehow, and bite my lips.

Nothing has been said, nothing surrendered.

For my own sake I should have been much more careful. Now—even in her absence—I find myself in her hands, which feels strange to me. I am surrounded—and at the same time, isolated. I am alone. I am apart from Love."

Links:

Website: <http://uviart.com>

See highlights of my body of work my website. It includes poems, stories, sculptures, oil paintings and watercolors, charcoal, pen and pencil drawings, and mixed media.

blog: <http://uviart.blogspot.com>

Find my thoughts about the creative process and news about my writing and my launch events.

Amazon page: <http://www.amazon.com/Uvi-Poznansky/e/B006WW4ZFG/>

Goodreads page: http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/5758946.Uvi_Poznansky

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/uviart>

AUTHORSdB page: <http://authorsdb.com/authors-directory/2642-uvi-poznansky>

Visit my author pages, where you can find my bio, my books, and (on Goodreads and Amazon) the animations I created based on my illustrations for my children books.