

Preface

by Corey Nicholl

The “writings binder” is now a thick pink three-ring binder with color copies of Frank’s digital paintings decorating the front and back covers, complete with index. Linda Mac, Frank’s lover and partner in crime for 38 years, started putting it together years ago as a way to bring Frank’s writings and poetry to his live performances, and to have available to read when they were talking to people. You never knew when Frank would call for a piece to be read, something that fit the moment and the person perfectly. The binder grew and grew slowly over the years as Frank kept writing and adding new and old pieces that he wanted to have available. Some years ago, it became too big and heavy to even lift! Linda and Erika (Shaver-Nelson), one of Frank’s students, separated the one binder into two, one for Frank’s poetry, and the other for his prose writings, and indexed both.

Frankly Speaking is really this binder of Frank’s prose writings. It roughly covers the period from the late 1970s until Frank’s death in 2013. It is not a complete collection of Frank’s writings during that period, and it is not arranged chronologically; rather it contains the writings that Frank most wanted to have on hand. We are presenting it alphabetically, just as it was in the binder.

The scope of Frank’s writing is truly amazing. As you open the pages of *Frankly Speaking*, you might first come upon Frank’s “just makes sense” plan for the complete political and social transformation of American society (see *Platform for Frank’s Presidential Candidacy 2008*)...then turn the page and Frank is passionately shaking up the “art world”, urging fellow artists to truly live their calling and not accept censorship (see *Art is Not Toothpaste* or *The Combine Plot*)...and then another page, and Frank is drawing you deeply into the heart of magic, responsibility, shamanism, play and sex (see *Inter-Penetration* or *Dance of No Dancers*). Frank always had this way of joyfully and fearlessly digging into the meat of any issue to get to something deeper: intimacy, community, human liberation. These writings were often inspired by fellow artists and the work with his own students. Frank always focused on the small, personal, intimate level. But their wide-reaching effect is profound, and for many years, these pieces have influenced and inspired people around the world through their appearance in magazines, books, and online.

Sometimes during a performance, Frank would ask a person in the “audience” to read randomly from his writings binder. As they read Frank’s words, the writing would become a “jam” with whatever else was happening. It always created new levels of depth, intimacy, meaning, what Frank was always going for!

“I used all my tricks and tools: slides, strobe lights, random readings of my writings, the gestures which I have made more explicit, etc. There were layers of different activities in the room. On one end of the room were Tomek, Shirt, Abigail, etc. playing music joyfully. On the other end were the dancers working through morality, individualism, freedom, going beyond the comfortable acceptable thing, or not! In the middle of the room readers were totally jamming, when they were not playing dress-up.” (From Frank’s write-up of “The Uncomfortable Zones Of Fun”, Temescal Arts Center, Saturday, May 28, 2011)

On that note, in that spirit, enjoy!