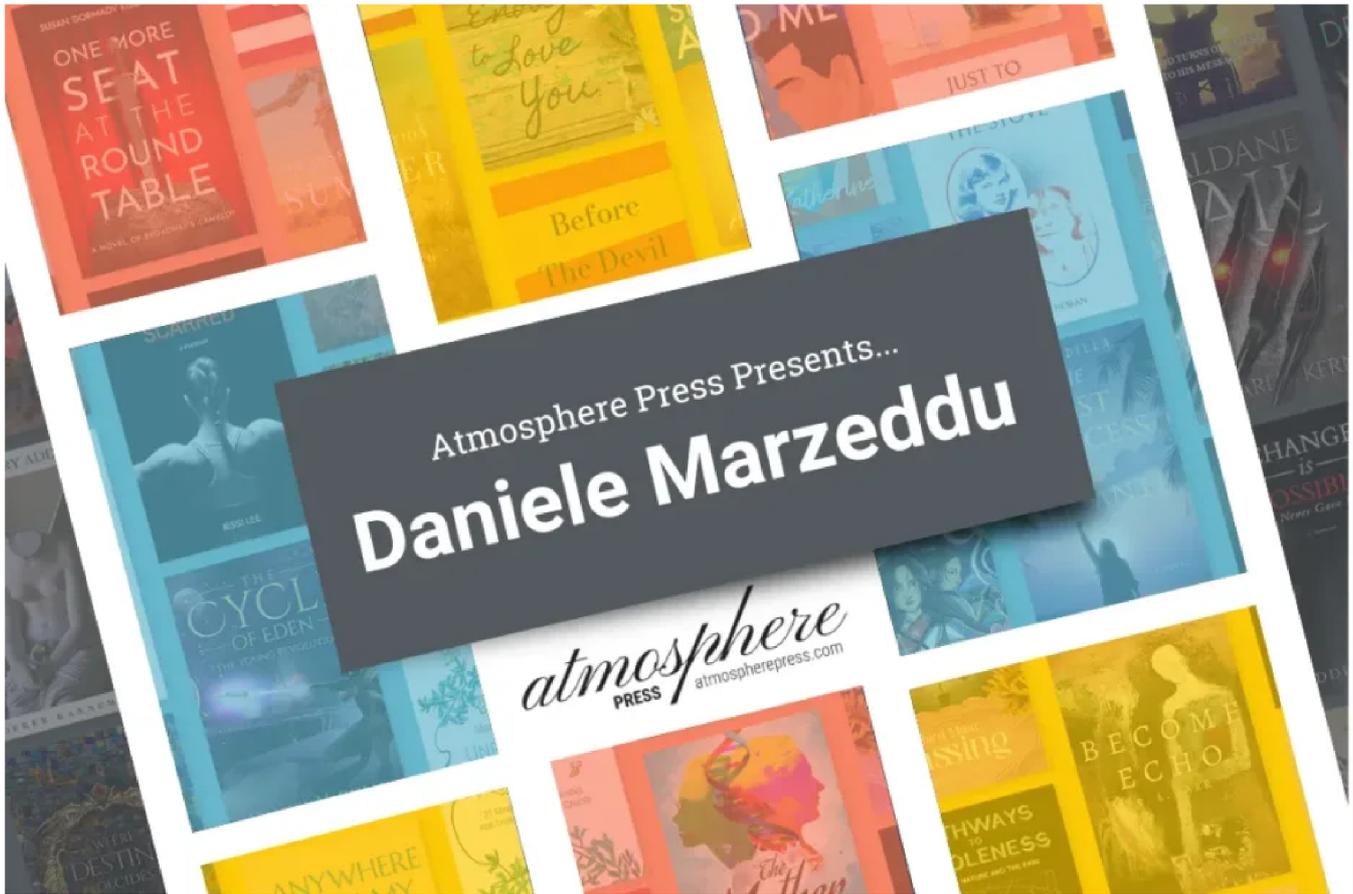




An Interview with Daniele Marzeddu



A saxophonist and music lover, Daniele holds an MA Degree in Conservation of Cultural Heritage from the University of Venice. In 2004 he relocated to Lisbon, specialising in photography and film production at the Cinemateca Portuguesa-Museu do Cinema of Lisbon. Over the last two decades he has collaborated with private and public institutions across Portugal, Spain, Italy, Finland, Albania, and the UK.

An award-winning photographer and filmmaker, *Films of Sicily and Sardinia* is his first book.

What inspired you to start writing this book?

I first read D.H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* (1921) when I was fifteen. At the time, I was a disoriented adolescent with a passion for music and visual art. I found literature generally interesting, but like many other schoolmates, I felt it was an obligation, a burden imposed on

us by our archaic grammar school. My aunt gave me a copy of the book for my birthday, and it was during that following year – at the warm dawn in September – that my mum and dad decided to head towards Mandas station (in Sardinia) to get aboard the train to Sorgono (the exact geographical centre of the island). Despite being struck by the creative usage of language whilst observing the landscape from the train window, I found it tricky at the time to delve into the Lawrentian vision of the world.

Tell us the story of your book's current title. Was it easy to find, or did it take forever?

Many years were to pass before I could grasp the concept of 'spirit of place.' Still resounding loud in my mind is Jack Nicholson, acting as George Hanson in *Easy Rider* (USA, 1969) saying: "Here's the first of the day, fellas. To ol' D.H. Lawrence." He sips avidly at his first taste of bourbon/freedom after his release from jail. That film was set on a different continent and in a different time, but accordingly, both the director Dennis Hopper and Nicholson were well-versed in Lawrence's poetics. It is said that they spent their free time with some Native Americans who lived near Kiowa Ranch (today the D.H. Lawrence Ranch) at Taos in New Mexico and had a siesta by the grave of the writer the day before shooting that scene. Inspired by these stories, I tried to get into a similar sensorial experience by visiting some of the locations, such as Sardinia, that Lawrence and Frieda visited in 1921. There have been countless reasons that led me to embark on this challenging project. Through my photographs, I aimed to create 'written' images of places and people that inspired my interest. Amazingly enough, I found a certain correspondence with Lawrence's observations, though one hundred years later.

Describe your dream book cover.

A fox roaming on a wild beach illuminated by the moonlight.

If your book had a soundtrack, what are some songs that would be on it?

As a matter of fact, my book is accompanied by a soundtrack by the Venetian composer Michele Bertoni, who has composed original music for the publication. Check it out at michelebertoni.bandcamp.com.

What books are you reading (for research or comfort) as you continue the writing process?

I quite like old classic books such as *Memoirs of Hadrian* and the *Liber Novus* by C.G. Jung. I am a big fan of Charles Bukowski and Raimond Carver. As a native Italian speaker, I love Pasolini, Italo Calvino, and Alberto Moravia.

What other professions have you worked in? What's something about you that your readers wouldn't know?

I have worked as a photographer/filmmaker for over twenty years; as a writer, I am very inspired by music and images, since I used to be a musician when I was a teenager.

Who/what made you want to write? Was there a particular person, or particular writers/works/art forms that influenced you?

A few years ago, I was working in Eastwood, on the outskirts of Nottingham, where I seized the opportunity to visit D.H. Lawrence's birthplace museum. It is a humble terrace house that became a museum in 1974. During that unusually British warm summer afternoon, I tried to imagine what the world would have looked like when Lawrence was a young boy living in one of the largest mining districts of Northern England. As I was wandering through the house, admiring those collodion portrait prints and the family furniture, I felt totally carried away on a journey back to Victorian times. The garden toilet, the wooden churns, the iron chimney cranes, and the four-poster beds were transporting me to a different space and time. 'Bert', as he was called there, was a contemporary of Giovannangelo, my paternal great-grandfather, and both spent their daily lives in their own unique insularity, surrounded by seas far apart.

In the bookshop, I came across the back of *Sea and Sardinia*. Leafing through it, I noticed that the first edition came out in 1921. The centenary of the adventure between Sicily and Sardinia would be celebrated within a few years. I immediately recalled the first time that I read it, when I was fifteen. At the time I was a very bewildered teenager with a passion for music and visual arts. I found literature generally fascinating, but, like many other schoolmates, I felt it as an obligation, a sort of heavy burden on which to redeem my sins as a lazy student, indolent to the dictates of that old provincial high school.

Where is your favorite place to write?

I love bars and pubs, because I can feel and smell the beauty of humanity; when patrons laugh and shout it is such a fantastic sensation! Noises and lights, odours and facial expressions, these are such great sources of inspiration whenever I write.

What advice would you give your past self at the start of your writing journey?

I don't know, actually. Writing has always been something that I've done for myself as a sort of self-therapeutic action for when I feel under the weather. Perhaps I would advise myself to keep it as a pleasure for the heart and soul.

What's one thing you hope sticks with readers after they finish your book?

In his *Sea and Sardinia*, Lawrence celebrates both the beauty and vitality of the earth and anticipating the environmental concerns that are central to the global debate on ecology today. As the ecology through which he roams changes with the landscapes of the two islands, the writer, once again, recognises the action of natural elements in a very holistic vision of reality.

For my part, through the observation of the same places a century on, I have strengthened my awareness of the importance of sustainability and the protection of nature. It is through real-life relationships, discoveries and encounters that one learns to read the complex language of the Oneness. And the journey...never ends.

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