

Cultural Daily


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John Yamrus Reviews *Evil Me* by Mish (Eileen Murphy)

John Yamrus · Wednesday, September 2nd, 2020

I don't often feel compelled to write book reviews. I get my share of offers and requests – from writers looking for a (hopefully) friendly face to help them push their book, or from publishers who are also looking for someone to help them spread the word. I bet it's been ten years or more since I actually wrote a real review and what I'm doing now isn't going to be anything close to a real review, either. But, I DO feel the need to write about Mish's (Eileen Murphy's) just released *Evil Me*. (Full disclosure: I was there at her home in Florida when I first read the book in manuscript. I was speaking at a college nearby and she and Michael were kind enough to put me up for one of the nights I was in town.)

I remember reading *Evil Me* while sitting on the couch in their tv room that served double duty as a photo studio for Eileen. One of the walls was covered in a black drape – background for some of the portraits she made. And I don't know what it was, exactly – maybe it was having that black wall staring me in the face when I first read those poems – but, I was blown away. I can still remember the feeling I had...I sat back and looked up at the ceiling. I didn't know where to look or how to think or what to say.

Previously, I had read (and very much liked) Eileen's last book...*FORTUNE WRITTEN ON WET GRASS*...but, this book was different. It felt different. It read different. I reacted different. There was and is something very personal and real about this book. She pretty much tells you that much right up front, with that title – *Evil Me* – and even those two little words seem to serve double duty. Is she talking about herself? Or, is she forcing the reader to see something dark and black and hidden within their own self? 

I'm not going to do the usual and waste my time or yours quoting lines here and there from the book, explaining them...laying them out...expecting you to pull any real kind of sense from the book. But, I will give in to convention just a little bit and give you just one line.

But, before I do – before you read it – you've got to promise to conjure up a mental picture of me, pushing 70, with all the mental and emotional baggage *that* brings with it, sitting on that couch in their house, with the sun coming in the window from the left, and there – right in front of me – staring me in the face, is that great big, black, unforgiving wall.

And I read:

Evil Me inside my head.
Every day she tells me a hundred times

to kill myself.

Imagine that!

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