

word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Tote [təʊt]

verb

1. to carry, lug or haul, often something heavy

noun

1. *Tote bag*: a large bag with a handle carried by hand or over the shoulder

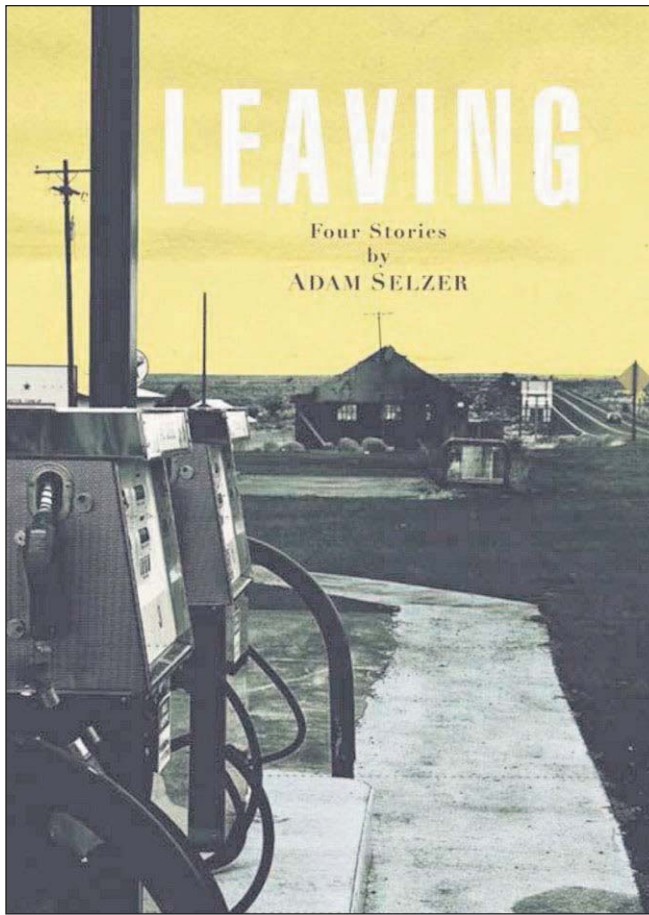
2. *Fishing*: a container of any size and material — wood, plastic, metal or fiber — used to hold today's catch on ice. Also used in the commercial transport of frozen fish in lieu of the cost of boxing the individual products.

Origin:

First introduced as a verb in 1677. Of unknown origin. A longstanding myth that "tote" was introduced in the 17th century from a West African language through the African slave trade by way of Virginia has been debunked by the Oxford English Dictionary for lack of evidence (See the Kikongo, *tota*, meaning pick up, the Kimbundu, *tuta*, meaning carry or the Swahili, *tuta*, to pile up). Tote bag first appears at the turn of the 20th century, following the word's first appearance as a noun in 1884.

"A fish tote is where the caught fish are stored before processing. 'In the Tote' is an on-line anthology of work by fisherpoets who have participated at the FisherPoets Gathering, collected and edited by fisherpoet and photographer Pat Dixon."

— fisherpoets.org



Submitted photo

"Leaving" by Adam Selzer.

Five Minutes With ...
ADAM SELZER

Q&A by RYAN HUME

Spend some time getting to know Adam Selzer, author, musician and founder of the Portland recording studio Type Foundry. The former frontman of Norfolk and Western will be reading (with live music) from his recent multimedia story collection, "Leaving," at the Sou'Wester Lodge in Seaview, Washington, at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21. His current band, Alialujah Choir, recently released a new album, "Big Picture Show," on Valentine's Day.

Could you tell us a bit about the inspiration behind the story "Art Garfunkel's Old People," which you will be reading at the Sou'Wester?

It's a story about a guy in

his mid-to-late 20s, which is an age when people start to realize what seems feasible and what is fantasy. There are a lot of books and movies chronicling the coming-of-age period but not as

many about this age. It's basically about coming to terms with one's own realization regarding talents, desires and expectations. I think that may sound somewhat pretentious, but I'm not sure how else to say it.

Not at all. Were you conscious of this in your late 20s, or did you have to get older to look back on it and see it as a transformative age?

I was definitely conscious of it ... and the older I've gotten, the easier it gets to come to terms with some of those things. That's one benefit of aging. I don't worry about things as much as I used to, and I'm much better at appreciating the little things. I used to get really down about not living up to my own expectations about how I wanted things to be that were out of my control. But now I'm much better at appreciating what I have, and I don't get disappointed when things don't live up to ideals. It's a much better place to be for me.

Switching gears a little: Your last book of prose, "Ami, Go Home," was a graphic novel. This new collection of stories, "Leaving," is accompanied with two CDs of you reading the stories against ambient soundtracks. What does injecting other mediums into these stories do for you? How do you hope it affects the audience?

The "Ami" book I always envisioned as a graphic novel. I never felt like the story would work as well

with just the written word. For the "Leaving" collection, I just thought it would be more interesting to add another aspect to the book because as an unpublished writer, putting something in print into the world, I felt like it could benefit from having something else, another element involved. Somewhat of a "something-to-hide-behind" concept. It makes it not just about me, which I like. But most importantly, I have such talented musician friends, when the idea came about, it seemed like an obvious choice to try and make it happen because I knew those guys would make some amazing music. I'm really honored that they are involved.

So how did the idea come about of providing a soundtrack to each story?

I recorded a project with the writer Rick Bass and Sellarondo a few years ago ... They came into my studio, and Rick read short stories while the band played behind him live. It was a really interesting idea and made the stories come to life in a new way. So, I sort of stole the idea from that, but I wanted the musicians to have free reign and surprise me; so I recorded myself reading the stories and handed them off. Each person's music is completely different from all the rest, which is so great. Also, I listen to a lot of radio programs and am always fascinated at how much music can enhance a mood; so I suppose some of the inspiration came from that as well.

I can definitely see old radio programs as an influence to this project. Since the book and CDs are released by Jealous Butcher Records, do you think the experience of

releasing a book on a record label was different than working with a traditional publisher? How so?

I've never attempted to publish before, and the thought of sending out stories to literary journals seemed way too daunting and overwhelming. I know to be a serious writer that's what you need to do, but I just don't have any expectations about writing. I just wanted to put this out before I got too sick of it. It didn't even occur to me to try and find a traditional publisher. That seems too legitimate for the scope of the project. I wanted it to be low-key, and, truth be told, I find it highly unlikely that anyone would want to publish these stories in this form from an unknown writer. I like the idea of it coming out this way, and hopefully it will find a small limited audience, and, if not, that's totally fine with me. I guess it goes back to the earlier questions about expectations. I'm fine with releasing this in such a low-key manner. I'm not trying to make it anything more than just a small independent release. I just want to have fun with it playing these shows and having a reason to write and spend time with my friends who are playing with me.

What's on the horizon?

My band Alialujah Choir is released a record Feb 14; that's the most exciting thing. And we're doing some shows with Neko Case in April. As for writing, I haven't been doing much of that. I'd love to do another tour with the graphic novel (I did some shows for that in Australia last year). I've been pretty busy recording people in the studio, so that's where most of my time is going.

Surprise!
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