



## HOW I WRITE – MICHAEL GREGORIO



**Husband and wife team Michael G. Jacob and Daniela De Gregorio write together under the pen name Michael Gregorio. *A Visible Darkness* is their third novel.**

1. Where are you right now?

Sitting in my study. Lionello, our cat, is asleep on top of my scanner. Daniela is in the kitchen washing the dishes!

2. Where do you write?

I have a spacious, well-lit room complete with computer, stereo and my vast collection of nineteenth century photographs. My desk is a beautiful Renaissance-style bench table in dark oak, and it must be at least 250 years old. Daniela writes at the bottom end of the long kitchen table.

3. How do you write?

Well, Daniela is not *always* in the kitchen. It was her turn for the dishes, and she prefers the kitchen for writing, saying that there is more light in there. We plan our novels in great detail, then decide who will write each particular chapter. Having done that, we sit down and do it. Then, together, we decide which bits we like, which we don't like, and we work on it until we are both happy.

4. What keeps you writing?

Having a contract and a deadline works wonders. Apart from that, the desire to tell a story, passion for a character or an idea, and the satisfaction of bringing it all to a successful conclusion.

5. Who do you write for?

Difficult question! We have always wanted to write – we both did so before we started writing together. So, I suppose, we write for ourselves, for our agent who believes in us,

for our editor who trusts us, and for all the people who are kind enough to buy or borrow the books that we have written.

6. Do you discuss your work with anyone?

Daniela and I seem to do nothing else. We are both bursting with ideas, constantly trying them out on each other, fantasizing about what might work well in the novel that we are writing.

7. How do you know if your work is good?

You don't. We work on a book until we are exhausted. Then we ask the opinion of our agent, and our editor. So far, we've been very lucky. They have always been delighted with the stuff that we have produced.

8. Do you have any unwritten characters in mind?

We have just finished the fourth novel featuring Prussian magistrate, Hanno Stiffeniis. It is, perhaps, time for a change – a temporary halt, at least – and we have a new project lined up which features two fascinating characters. One is English, the other is Italian. Just like Daniela and I.

9. Which book do you wish you'd written?

Daniela: *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brönte.

Mike: *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens.

Please note that they are both tormented tales of frustrated love and immense mystery.

10. What is your literary guilty pleasure?

Mid-morning and mid-afternoon, I stop for coffee and a cigarette. Daniela doesn't smoke, but she does like yoghurt.

11. Which writer made you want to write?

The Shakespeare of the Sonnets: every idea perfectly formed, perfectly expressed. Wow! Daniela, on the other hand, was, and is, a Kafka freak.

12. Who's the most exciting author writing today?

Alan Furst. He plots brilliantly, his characters are rock solid, his dialogue is perfection.

13. If you weren't writing you'd be...?

We would be what we have both been for many years – teachers. Daniela still teaches philosophy and history; I taught EFL and the history of photography. We have both got a lot of satisfaction from sharing knowledge and ideas.

14. What next?

Our third novel, "A Visible Darkness," has just been released in the UK. We submitted our fourth novel, provisionally entitled "Unholy Awakening" last week. What next? We think it is time for a short holiday!