

Once upon a time...

Noel Davis, who so recently has left us, once wrote,

*Now I love to tell the stories
To share the vision that I have*

~from the poem ***Once Upon a Time***

This indeed is what Noel did in his thirty years of poetry and reflections. He touched us so profoundly with his stories of our struggles with life challenges, the wonders of creation, our Aboriginal Peoples (*Didgeridoo*), living on the edge (*Praying at the Edge, excited and apprehensive*), laughing and crying at our foibles, reaching out and drawing back, being consoled and disturbed, discovering the playful inner child.

The rich treasure chest of Noel's poetry offers us a plethora of reflections on the human condition of living within the symphony of creation. Noel drew from his poetic imagination to illuminate how banal happenings can be inner symbols of something mysterious and holy.

However, for this transfiguration to occur, Noel warned us, we must stop and gaze. Again and again Noel invited us to a return to the intimacy of sacred moments (*Homecoming*). He urged us to be *Extravagant with Silence* and 'make space' (*The Grace of Space*).

Our inner truth is there, awaiting us to discover its wisdoms, but we must allow space for this hidden pearl to surface into our consciousness:

*Inside
Cultivate a garden of inner quiet
For seed to settle...*

~from ***A garden of inner quiet***

Infusing all Noel's poetry, the Spirit hovered through the Presence, illustrated by parables, Eucharist, miracles, healing, cross, resurrection, Sabbath, all washed with the inundations of Divine Love. An abiding faith in a Gracious God energised Noel's hopeful vision of our humanity, yes, even within the tangles of our foibles (*The Grace of Coming a Cropper Big Time*).

In his intimate connectedness with creation, Noel illustrated his books by magnificent nature photos and art. He asked us to allow the magic of earth's rainbow colours to grace and heal us with a tapestry of wonder (*Timeless places, This land in my Blood*). Are we heeding Noel's plea for being passionate carers of creation (*Beatitudes of the Carers of Creation*)? The time with Trish in the Red Centre of Australia deepened Noel's companionship with nature (*Sculptress of Red centre Wonder*).

In his poems, Noel's language is a delightful mix of Australian slang and everyday homely conversations. We are reminded how everyday happenings are actually bubbling with inner

meaning if we pause before their mystery. *Bone dry, cropper, bloody sheep dog, poo land, bugger* all such slang ground us with the everyday. Again and again Noel's poetry returns to this theme, "Look around you," he urges us, "miracles of life are all there to grace your daily moments. Don't go chasing rainbows".

*Oh to see and take the simple way
To the heart of everything
The way the humble go
The way that wisdom walks...*

Why not celebrate these moments with dance and song? (*Swept up into the Dance Born to Dance*).

And always as Noel acknowledges in his Forewords, there is Trish with her love, support and encouragement, joined in partnership with the artists, photographers and editors. Over the years in my conferences so many people have shared how Noel's poetry has touched their lives.

On a personal note, little did I realise that when I walked into very first teaching class at Marist Lidcombe in July 1956, there was Noel sitting there right in front of me. What a graced encounter for me. Noel's poetry taught us all lessons, oh so slowly learned:

*It's through the little sharings of ourselves
the takings of each other
into the intimate places of our lives...*

~from ***Expanding the Universe***

And finally, when the end was near, Noel composed his own farewell liturgy. He chose an earlier written poem ***The Spirit's Bloody Sheep Dog*** to say 'yes' to the final summons to an eternal home,

*And the bugger won't leave me alone I know
and the Spirit won't call him off
until I dare heed my heart's desire
and take in trust the unknown track
I know to be my truth.*

Vale Noel Davis.

We miss you and thank you for gracing our lives.

*Kevin Treston
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