

# Nourish to Flourish

Nourish to Flourish brings together practitioners' voices and creative practices, and appreciative reviews of books that support strengths-based approaches to human interactions.

## Book Appreciation



### Keith Storage

Keith is a registered psychologist with the Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) and associate fellow with the Australasian College of Health Service Management (ACHSM). He has designed and implemented health and wellbeing frameworks across the community, health and education sectors. Keith's current focus is on developing his work in Appreciative Dialogue (ApDi) to assist individuals in moving from self-doubt to inspired positive action.

a mother's cry  
a mother's celebration



neena verma

### a mother's cry ... a mother's celebration

By Neena Verma

Notion Press, 2016

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A Grief Memoir

*a mother's cry ... a mother's celebration* is a grief memoir; the unfolding of a young man's wisdom, whose revelation "The only way to know is to go in not-knowing", echoes from page to page as the author, his mother, takes the reader on her pilgrimage "...from grief to grace".

The book reveals the story of the author's life since the moment she lost her son Utkarsh at the age of twenty-two years and three months, having "...completed his mortal journey and transcended to the world beyond the worlds". She emphasises she has not written a book but rather a poem. Indeed, the book is a poem which includes within it several smaller poems written by the author.

*'Grief is love not wanting  
to let go.'*

Earl A. Grollman

From her pain and joy, and with thoughtful measure, these smaller poems carry and emphasise the inextricable link between suffering the loss of her child and his undeniable presence that increasingly resonates throughout the book as her suffering gives way to the pain and joy of truth. There is an overarching feeling to the book best expressed by Earl A. Grollman: "Grief is love not wanting to let go."

The suffering experienced by the author's immediate family, including her husband and younger son, along with the support of her mother and interactions with relatives and friends, are truthfully laid bare. Apart from the expression of deep gratitude, past silent wounds come to the fore. This is confusing and frustrating for the author, whose rumination: "I wondered at the complex mosaic of grief. It is painfully intriguing" draws the reader in all the more to the emerging complexity of grief and loss as experienced individually and collectively.

The recognised key stages of grief developed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance are all evident in this grief memoir. As Kübler-Ross emphasised, these stages are not necessarily linear or predictable – this is clear throughout the author's experience.

### The hero's journey

*a mother's cry ... a mother's celebration* is replete with all the hallmarks of the hero's journey, a phrase coined by Joseph Campbell who wrote prolifically about stories and rituals associated with grief, joy, fear and love across cultures.<sup>1</sup> The author's experience since the loss of her son includes the three main phases of the hero's journey: Separation – leaving the ordinary world; Initiation – venturing into the unknown and faced with trials and challenges; and Return – transformed, resurrected and evolved

*She began to comprehend  
that her journey is not about  
moving on from her grief but  
moving forward with it*

Living through unsuspected and unforeseen ordeals, the entire experience challenges and strengthens the author in previously unimagined ways to the extent that she comes to appreciate and master both the ordinary known world that she has become numb to and the unknown world she has unwillingly been thrust into. It's as if the muttering of the wise, saintly woman who appears toward the end of the book was a deliberate and well-timed message for the author as she began to comprehend that her journey is not about moving on from her grief but moving forward with it: "Go on, it is a pilgrimage like never before, never after". The wise woman's words also ring true for the reader who can only

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1949).

*Grief has its own timeline  
that cannot be tampered with*

ever be completely immersed in this poem as if to join the author in her anguish and eventual catharsis.

The experience of grief is as unique as the individual experiencing it. *a mother's cry ... a mother's celebration* highlights how grief can lead to the kind of individual growth only possible through that experience.

### Grief, an awakening

Emphatically clear is the author's understanding that grief has its own timeline that cannot be tampered with if there is to be an eventual emergence of self; a deep realisation and appreciation that one's own story is part of a greater narrative. This grief awakening is beautifully expressed by the author:

*This interplay also opened me to the essential truths of nature and of life. That interstellar change is certain. That this change is actually a prelude to growth. That spiritual awakening does not come before deep innocent sleep.*

*a mother's cry ... a mother's celebration* is available globally in e-book and paperback through online bookstores and retailers.



#### Neena Verma

Neena Verma, Ph.D., is an Appreciative Inquiry thought leader, ICF-PCC coach, NTL professional member, TAOS Associate, and Managing Trustee for the UTKARSH Foundation. She has authored one book and several articles and serves on the AIP Editorial Board where she has contributed to several book appreciations. Neena manages a library movement for underprivileged children as well as volunteering for various social causes.

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