

A LIFE WELL LIVED

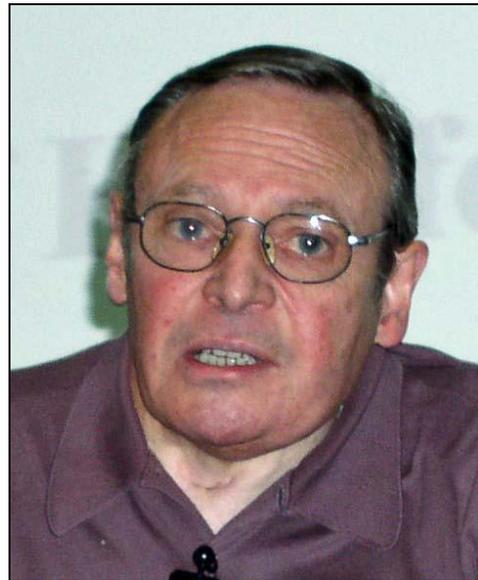
Seán Brophy

1943-2015

Our much respected colleague, Seán Brophy, died on 14th February 2017. Even for those of us who may not have known him well, there was always the sense about Seán of a life well lived. In Ireland when somebody dies, we say ‘Ní fheicimid a leithéid arís’ (we will not see his likes again). And while we must always hope that Seán’s special way of encountering life will influence those who met him to try and do likewise, he is undeniably a ‘hard act to follow’. We may not see his likes again but perhaps Seán, above anybody, would want us not to be intimidated by the energy of his efforts, nor by the breadth and diversity of his achievements, but rather to be enthused with his own deep response to George Kelly’s view that “each man contemplates in his own personal way the stream of events upon which he finds himself so swiftly borne”. Seán’s contemplation and the lived experience of his life took many forms.

Born in 1943 and challenged by physical ill-health all of his life, this never seemed to be responded to by Seán as limiting how he engaged with life and the continuous explorations he undertook, professionally and personally in Ireland and abroad. Seán was known, admired and loved in a myriad of ways, as a son, a brother, a husband, a father, a student, an engineer, an organisational consultant, a teacher and advisor, a valued volunteer to organisations such as L’Arche Dublin, a stalwart Charitable Board member, an organisational consultant to senior managers in the banking industry in times of great economic and societal difficulties, a member of the PCP community, and above all a friend and poet, and yes, a patient too. These are only some of the ‘Seáns’ that Seán Brophy brought forth to engage with the world. And while ‘being a patient patient’ was frequently unavoidable it always seemed as if Seán was refusing to allow ‘patient’ to be the dominant role he would play. Writing, sharing and publishing his poetry was of great importance and

perhaps this was the constant spiritual stream which held all of his riches and multitude of voices in one sympathetic embrace. *That*, one might say, was Seán Brophy, Dublin born and bred, man and poet, a teacher and friend who, as his many and beloved Kellyian friends and colleagues might say, did indeed ‘transcend the obvious’ in the most wondrous and life-giving ways.



In the Foreword to his 2004 book of poems (*Girl through my Window*), as he wondered about the meaning and purpose of ‘being’, Seán wrote that “My guess is that I am here to express who I am and I do this by using my gifts especially the gift of love for my own benefit and that of the world”. Perhaps the poet Brendan Kennelly describes best how Seán seemed to meet life:

It was a gift that took me unawares, and I accepted it.

A gift that Seán also honed was that of the non-rhyming utterly precise form of poetry, Haiku. For him Haiku, “in an unique, albeit small way, shows what it is to be human” and so I offer you Seán’s own, and most apposite, Haiku verse:

*Do not grieve for me ---
This day I celebrate the
Rebirth of my spirit.*

REFERENCE

Brophy, S. (2004). *Girl though my window, and other poems*. Dublin: Rainsford Press.

Bernadette O'Sullivan, Dublin, Ireland

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Correspondence address:
clanaodh@gmail.com

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