

When the Quiet Man Burns (A biographical reflection by Mikel Ocean Azure)

Where will you stand when the quiet man burns?

You will stand where scars glow clean in the darkness. Where hope lets pain flow past without needing to drown in its dark embrace. Where it is human to struggle, honest to fail and where the fact that you still live is proof that your heart still has wings.

I call Graeme the Quiet Man not as an obvious play on his family name, but as a statement of his personality and nature. It is one of the infinite number of paradoxes that swirl around G that he performs with power but is an introvert who likes the quiet of his own company. Burning is a good image to capture this reality, like fire he can generate a lot of heat without making much noise.

You will stand where the music will kiss you like a lover and ride you like lightening. Where words call up spirits and truth is luminous. Perhaps you won't notice how far you have been called out of shadows and into a gentle light.

G grew up in the steel mill town of Wollongong. His hands are dirty. Plenty of stains on his history, plenty of scars on body and soul. His is a life like yours. For more than four decades he has constantly expressed that journey in music and performance. Live performance in small venues. Large concerts with thousands present. Pouring out heart week after week. Graeme's journey as an artist is no fairy tale. It is full of passion but not so full of wisdom. Full of depth but kept constrained inside unnecessarily narrow limitations. Great concepts aborted due to production conflicts. Great albums poorly marketed. Great potential not trusted.

You will stand where love often wears a robe stained with crap and blood. Where purity cannot be seen if you think The Law is the highest aspiration of the human heart. Where night and day might look like equals but the night has a moon and the daytime's shadows always flee.

You will stand in a dangerous place. Some songs will warm you, some will burn you, some will make your spirit writhe. If you want to hide from your own life, don't listen to the quiet man burn.

Graeme has performed all over Australia, in New Zealand, the United States and in Mexico. Drummer, songwriter, lead singer, guitarist, band founder, album producer, solo artist. A lifetime of performance and a lifetime of LIFE

meld together in his art today. He has done it hard, professionally and privately, when you open yourself up to his art you will get much more than entertainment, you will get the gift of honest struggle and honest hope, his heart to yours.

You will stand where power reeks of service and the passion to see something change might stir your own deepest desires.

You will stand where one man's journey is indecently naked. If you face it, so is yours. When the quiet man burns you are invited to see some of your own truth. Do you fail? Do you dream? Do you get pissed at the way our world spins blind and the "leaders" strangle hope while they get fat on our dreams? Do you love the wrong person? Do you make one mistake a million times? Do you hate your own flaws but give yourself anyway? When the quiet man burns, if you look with honest eyes, you will see yourself in the flickering flames.

An ancient wisdom says that when a person has a "double mind" their life is unstable. Graeme has tried to do two things in the past, but his heart was always straining towards performance. Many of us take decades to work out what our own One Thing is. What is that One Thing which is the absolute core of our journey in the world? When we truly see our One Thing and live it, then we give the world the best of ourselves and the world flows further toward life. It is the One Thing of the Quiet Man's life to give, present, communicate perform – out of the essence of himself; the core of his being. THAT is his place in our world and THAT is what you receive when he serves you with his art.

Everyone burns when they find and do their One Thing. Now it's time to watch the Quiet Man burn.

You will stand in a whitefella's Dreaming. His landscape is the suburban heartland. From the furnace of the steelworks to the sacred ground where two people bind their lives in vows often broken. From the wind dancing across the Derwent River to the sun setting golden over the God space of Uluru. He burns in our world, sometimes the red light of his burning looks like blood, sometimes like desire. Whatever the light, it's shining something good on our lives.

If you get the chance, come see the Quiet Man burn, you won't leave untouched.

Mikel Ocean Azure

