

KEEPING STOCK

A friend of mine keeps a written record of moments or events. He's a wonderful writer, but you're unlikely to have heard of him unless you follow the Perth Writers' scene. He's scribbled away for years - an undiscovered Tim Winton or a J. K. Rowling (who sat in cheap cafes knocking out best-sellers on paper napkins).

Mike carries this battered exercise book around all the time and scribbles away... One day (we'd met by chance again and sat together quietly enjoying the 'locals') I asked "What are you writing about today...?" He grinned and replied "Some of my best moments!" It turns out, Mike is on a sort of fishing expedition, writing down all sorts of stuff. He's got one hundred and ten tiny stories so far.

Like this one:

"In year 8, I was in the School Christmas Concert. I loved singing, and our music teacher was cool - I guess that would be 'totally awesome' as I write. At any rate back then the school Board (not being familiar with 'cool'), chose 'Silent Night' and gave me a solo part. If they were looking for a small young boy with a sweet tender voice and no clue, that's what they got (these days, even the dog leaves the room when I sing). Anyway, at the end, in the middle of the longest and most terrifying silence of my young life, just before the applause, a parent in the front row sighed, smiled and said 'Wow!'"

And this one:

"When I was 16, I went to this club in Perth and Andy Rich happened to be there. Andy was not particularly good-looking but somehow he always, always, got the girl. That night, I found out how. Half way through the first dance tune, a girl walked up to him, a very nice looking girl, and asked if he'd like to dance. Without hesitation Andy replied, "I don't dance, but I kiss like you wouldn't believe." She left with him. God, how I hated Andy!"

Maybe Mike's got too much time on his hands. And maybe he's onto something - recording the small but significant things that come to us in the middle of the night - memories and moments of innocence before the things we've done, the things that have been done to us and all the things which now seem too damn late to fix become 'our story'.



© Preparedmind Australia. May 2009