

## 100. A wake and a celebration at the kennel

Today was Jon's wake, where for the first time all Jon's family and the closest friends collected together to share his favourite foods, his best wine, stories, hugs, tears and love. We met at Becky's apartment in Footscray. We came from all over. I travelled on my own, as a flu has laid me low for the week and I didn't want to infect any of my family, so there was no hugs and kisses, except for Jon's family who were less precious than mine. I cried most of the way there, there had been no funeral, so I have had tears when Denise and I picked up the ashes in Dandenong East, and tears today. My GPS directed me and did a good job. Rodriguez touched my soul as I drove to the gathering.

It was a relief to be all together, to be all sharing the pain of loss and the joy of living. Even without someone we loved in our midst in the physical, he was there as real as you and I. Stories were told by his three siblings and Denise. And his closest friends. And his friend/colleague who shared the work and the passion. His parents, their grief unspeakable, absorbed it all. We only had to exchange looks and we knew. I was thanked over and over for my Almanacs "Lost Dog" article, for being able to express what so many felt. I was thankful for being able to write about my experience. That it touched others made it even better.

I was originally going to the twilight Doggie/Adelaide game with Denise and the Hiltons. Having not listened to Mum at the Saints/Hawks game and struck down by an "I told you not to go" flu last week, I thought better of it. Instead, I came home and watched the first half of the Sydney vs St.Kilda game before switching over to the Doggies/Crows. I watched the best bit of the Saints, it went downhill from half time. Glad for the distraction of a better, faster, more glorious Doggie victory.

They did it again, our Doggies. On a day we needed hope and glory, the boys from the West pulled another wonderful game out of their hats and hearts and we got to cry and weep some more. Denise and the family at the game, me sobbing on my couch. It was as it needed to be, again. A game which symbolised so much for so many.

As the Doggies pulled away in the last quarter, I kept yelling at the TV and crying, knowing that those at the game and I shared this fabulous moment in time and the joy it bought to all. I have vowed now to take up Jon's seat next year and will be a Doggie supporter and member when it is not up against the Saints. This will give me something brilliant to watch as my boys rebuild. I am forever a red, white and black girl, but find myself with much red, white and blue in my soul and will allow all the colours to mix. It just seems right.

Yvette Wroby

19<sup>th</sup> August 2013