

A Yearn For The Unsaid Words Of My Father

By Nette Hargreaves

A quarter of a century after his passing, there are hardly any traces of my father. A few family photographs, and his old camera.

My father loved quality. He believed in buying the best rather than buying the most. Tonight I sit holding his camera, the flash and fancy lenses, accompanied by a greying manual dated 1981. A Canon A1, owned and enjoyed for 10 years. I rifle through the camera bag knowing that his hands once touched what I now hold in mine.

The camera accompanied us on excursions and family holidays, my brother and I captured on film that was later developed in a studio, prints dutifully collected upon our return. Things were not so instant in my father's world.

My father lived an outwardly successful life. He got a degree, married, and raised a family. He had all the material trappings of success, a house, burgeoning career, high-end cars, and solid financial portfolio.

Yet what is left of him after all this time?

His time was before the arrival of the information superhighway so to Google his name is futile. He never cruised that road.

Not even his grave remains. You don't get that long in a German cemetery. Other people need space to die. Other people need space to live.

He used to say, *"a man should build a house, father a son and write a book."* He did two out of three—which surely ain't

bad—but my heart yearns for the unsaid words he took with him forever.

Was he happy? I can't say.

Did he die with regrets? A few, I should imagine.

Unlived dreams? As above.

His camera, though backward by digital standards, evokes so many memories, provokes so many uncried tears. Uncried no longer, at last and at least.

Tomorrow the camera leaves my possession. I sold to a student who will use it for her photography studies. There's no use in holding on. I haven't used this camera to take a single photograph in 25 years. I won't use it to take a single photograph in the next 25 either.

It needs to go to someone who will [bring it back to life](#) and give it a purpose beyond being a sentimental relic. Most of all, I need to release the emotional significance attached to a plastic casing and a bunch of outdated glass.

I need to let it go along with the sadness, grief, and pain curled around the memories and images it conjures.

It is my desire that parting with this camera will bring about something to celebrate curiosity, exploration and living over stasis. And it is my hope that writing about my father and his love for quality and photography will bring his name into this vast anonymous digital world.

And those dreams? [Don't let them go unlived.](#)

Whatever legacy my Dad may have wanted to leave—beyond that house and that son—he thought he had time. And he didn't. His time ran out before he was ready to leap.

So don't fool yourself into thinking you have all the time in

the world. No one does.

And you don't either.

#LIVENOW