

## **Book Review**

**Paul Callaghan**

# **Paul Callaghan: Luminous Moments**

Reviewed by John Clare

Three or four years ago I turned on a radio on a Saturday morning and happened on Paul Callaghan talking to Kim Hill. Two things in that conversation struck me: the frankness with which Paul described his cancer symptoms, his prognosis and the treatments that he was undergoing, and secondly the technical detail that he had mastered in a field not his own. It is that frankness which sets the tone for this little volume of essays, but there is also the flavour of someone keen to understand new and relevant topics and to share that understanding.

There are seven essays, each of length four to seven pages, written either for publication in a particular venue or as talks for specific occasions and chosen by the author for this volume shortly before his death. The first two are autobiographical in nature; one, 'Luminous Moments', celebrating serendipity, the other describing highlights in his work in magnetic resonance. For me the highlight of the volume is the transcript of a Kim Hill

interview 'On Pseudoscience', a well argued and entertaining exposition of his views on the necessity for evidence-based decision making in science and medicine. This is followed by two essays on his experiences as a cancer patient and on views formed as a result of that experience. The last two articles are very personal: a short talk to a father's breakfast that was no doubt appropriate to that occasion but to me is rather too intimate for publication, and some general advice on life offered by a terminally ill man to a mostly student audience at graduation. Taken together, these very personal essays form a cameo of someone who has striven to use their talents and accepted the limitations on their time.

This volume is presented only as an eBook that is available as either an .epub file for iPads, Android phones, computers and most e-readers or as a .mobi file for Kindle readers. Downloading Adobe Digital Editions (ADE) to a laptop provided a workable platform for reading the .epub file with the added advantage over printed text of being able to search and bookmark the document. This eBook is one of a group inaugurating a class of small volumes published by Bridget Williams Books and I note that although the publishers are using ADE they have kept things simple for the user by not incorporating a digital rights management scheme.

Published March 20 2013

ISBN 9781927131800 (EPUB)

9781927131817 (KINDLE)

Available direct from [www.bwb.co.nz](http://www.bwb.co.nz) and from major retailers including Amazon, Kobo and eBooks.com

RRP\$4.99

