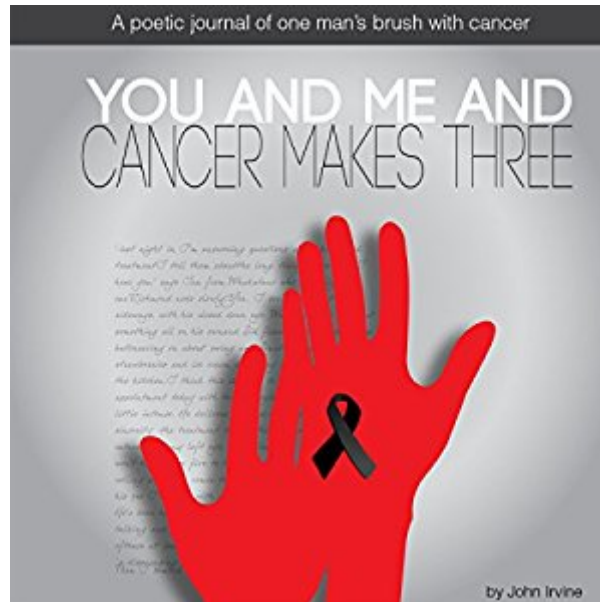


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You And Me And Cancer Makes Three



Synopsis

You and Me and Cancer Makes Three is a poetical journey about survival from cancer. An uplifting and enduring tale of his journey with cancer. John held his hands around his own mortality, yet leaves the clinic whole, with much more than he ever expected: he discovers the true meaning of friendship, redemption, and hope as told in his poetry. Discovering he had skin cancer, John Irvine had routine surgery in 2009. However, a few cells had gone feral and radical treatment became necessary. On the advice of his oncologist, he checked in at the Lions Cancer Lodge at Waikato Hospital in New Zealand for five weeks. In this unique poetic memoir, John Irvine tells his story with wit, honesty, and emotion. The friends he makes at Waikato will become your friends; you'll share frustration and laughter and bittersweet tears. *You and Me and Cancer Makes Three* by Pohutukawa Publishing Limited brings well known New Zealand poet and author to the spotlight with needed attention to cancer survivors.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Review of *You and Me and Cancer Makes Three* by Marge Simon
When I was growing up years ago, hardly anyone you knew contracted cancer. Now, "The Big C" is all too familiar a Calling Card, and often it touches your dearest friends and closest relatives. People don't like to speak of it, much less read accounts of someone's experience with it unless, perhaps, they are victims. When Irvine's book arrived, I wasn't expecting it to be more than some verses that would make me sad or uncomfortable --how wrong I was! I found it uplifting in many

respects. Irvine himself wasn't anticipating the camaraderie that he shared with others being treated for various sorts of cancers. It was like "we're all in this together, so let's make the best of it!" And sure enough, he finds much to appreciate about his fellow patients. I'm so pleased that John Irvine lent his considerable poetic talent in creating this memoir. In his words: "You would be forgiven for thinking that forty souls all suffering the same wretched blight in one form or another would be stultifying to depressing company, but not their unstinting selflessness and bright--- spirited demeanor sometimes made me feel a bit of a fraud. Mr. Grumpy comes to town and gets a very serious lesson in humility. Something we can all appreciate and share, whether we are survivors or just lucky that Mr. Big C hasn't arrived in our own lives." -Marge Simon, multiple Bram Stoker Award-winning author

(Disclosure: The reviewer received an electronic copy for review purposes.) Cancer. Two little syllables that conjure up dire images and emotions. Anyone who has ever had anything to do with it will know what an ugly, vicious, all-too-often fatal affliction it can be. The temptation with such daunting subject matter might be to dwell on the horror, the grief, the fear and the pain.

Alternatively, one might be tempted to tell stories of miracle cures, those one-in-a-million recoveries that are meant to be uplifting but are ultimately mocking in their rarity. Author John Irvine is having none of that. "This is no sob story," he says, right from the get-go. This is a tale told with simple eloquence, of life. Love. Laughter. And that peculiar Kiwi stoicism that rejects self-pity in favour of friendship and connection. Irvine complements his accessible verse with photos taken during his time in treatment, contrasting the sterile, high-tech environment of hospital treatment rooms with portraits of his fellow "inmates," the latter radiating humour, resilience, and lives well lived.

So John asks me to do a review of his cancer book and my immediate (though not vocalised) thought is "Eœurrgghh!" "I know I WILL do a review because I've known John a long time and he's a fine poet, and he and I have a history of reviewing each other's books, but this? An account of his stay at a cancer facility in New Zealand? I don't expect it to be a laugh a minute. I brace myself. I don't like the front cover. It doesn't lead me to believe I'm going to find anything other than trauma and pain inside. The back cover's better, though I'm not sure I quite believe the claims

of *Redemption and Hope* – they sound like blurb hyperbole. I set aside a morning to read it, expecting to have to break off regularly to go and stand in the sun and look at flowers or something to wrench myself out of the harrowing account I expect to find between its pages. And then I read it, and it's short, only 56 pages, I get through it in, I don't know, half an hour or so? I really have no idea. More to the point, I never stop reading; I never go and have a coffee or do some other activity that will keep me away from the text. There are many reasons for this, and one of them is the sheer joy of how the book looks, once you get away from the depressing cover art. The inside pages are a mass of colour, of joyful photos, of stunning graphic design. This is one hell of a slick publication, quite apart from John's writing. The publisher has done him proud and produced a thing of beauty. As for the writing itself – it's everything I would hope from the pen of John Irvine: wry, witty, warm, happy, sad, poignant. As for the promised hope and redemption – well yes, though these are not the words I would have used, as they suggest something a bit wishy-washy and sentimental, or worse still, inspirational. I'd have thrown the book across the room if it had been inspirational (metaphorically – I'm reading it on a pc, so the practicalities might have stopped me). I should also mention that it's also a cracking good read. It's about comradeship, about the way people touch each other's lives in unexpected ways. It's about the way the most dreaded of circumstances can lead you to places that you couldn't have foreseen, and can show you precisely what it means to be human – and that is the heart of it; that is why this is an important book.

You and Me and Cancer makes Three by John Irvine was a good quick read. This is a poetic journey of one man's journey of survival of cancer. After finding out that he had skin cancer, John checks himself into Lion's Cancer Lodge at Waikato Hospital in New Zealand. He journals his five weeks there. I enjoyed hearing about his journey and what he learned in his time there.

I was honored to receive an ARC of this wonderful tribute. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I was pleasantly surprised to find a tale of sadness and fear that was infused with joy and hope. I thought it was a wonderful way to say "thank you" to a caring and supportive medical facility and staff, The Lion's Cancer Lodge Waikato Hospital. It was also a very loving way to address a difficult moment of one's life while offering a comfort to those currently facing cancer or who may fight against it in

the future. A quick, sentimental read that is sure to touch your heart!

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