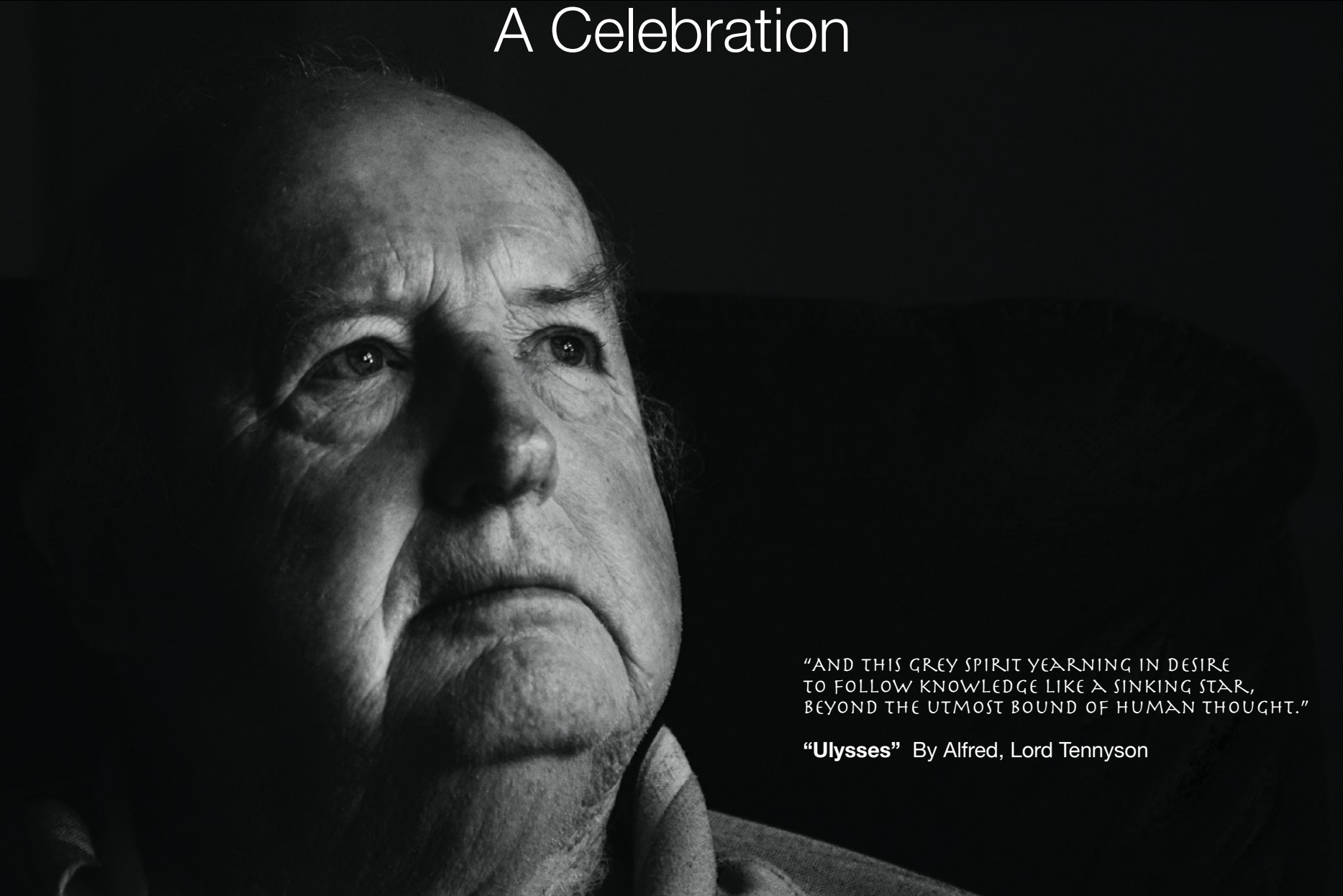


NEVILLE SYMINGTON

A Celebration



"AND THIS GREY SPIRIT YEARNING IN DESIRE
TO FOLLOW KNOWLEDGE LIKE A SINKING STAR,
BEYOND THE UTMOST BOUND OF HUMAN THOUGHT."

"Ulysses" By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

by
Shahid Najeeb



*the sun
rises to another day
your absence -*



“So the Absoluteness of Being is a truth arrived at through reflection. It is the product of thought. The thinking process has produced an intuition that penetrates through into the nature of Being. ... The false god is part of the narcissistic system. Other elements in that system are a denigrated object, a state of being merged with the embodied god, a paranoia towards the embodied god, the psyche in a jelly-like state, and absence of creative capacity.”

“The Spirit of Sanity”, 2001.



“My thesis is simple: that Socrates was right. We cannot do evil; we cannot do what is damaging to our own mind and to that of others and know it. We fashion the unconscious so as not to know it. We need to ditch Freud’s explanation of it as an amoral construction if we want to make progress in the work of helping our more disturbed patients and have a coherent theory supporting what we do.”

“The Blind Man Sees”, 2004.



"Of course we are not persons full stop. We are constantly being called to be persons. I think I am a person, but then meet someone - perhaps a patient, perhaps my next-door neighbour, perhaps a work-mate - and I am blown hither and thither and I know I am in aggregate mode, so my task is to start a work inside myself. It is the work of transforming this chaos into personhood."

"A Healing Conversation", 2006.

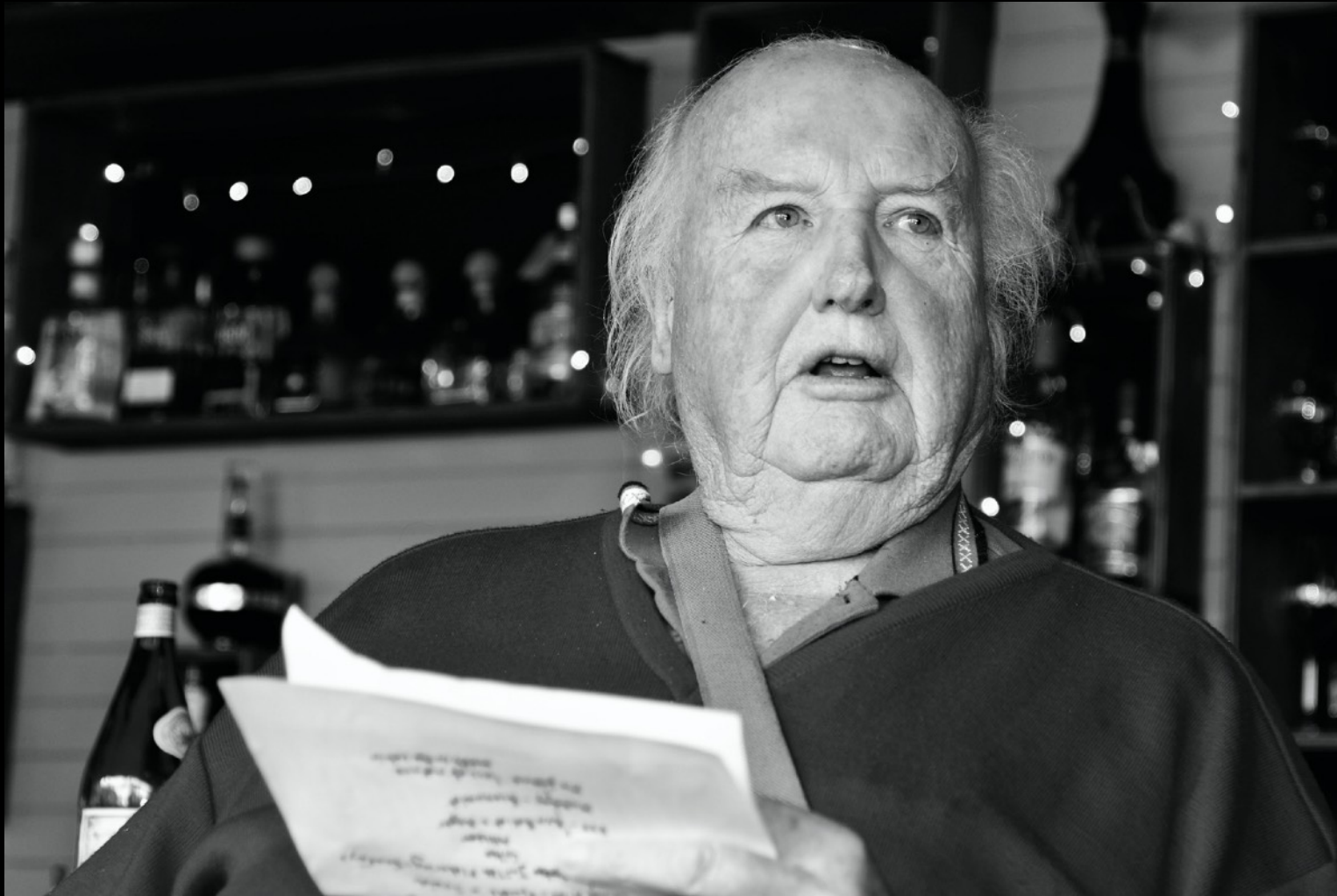


“The residence of the ‘it’, the uncreated, the non-person, is the institution. Institutions are made up of ‘its’ - uncreated elements. Institutions embody rules and regulations, formulated by committees in the hope that the spirit which initiated a movement of thought will be maintained by succeeding generations, yet frequently the maintainers of institutions do not have the spirit of the founder but rather an ingestion of a series of non-personal regulations.”

“The Psychology of the Person”, 2012.

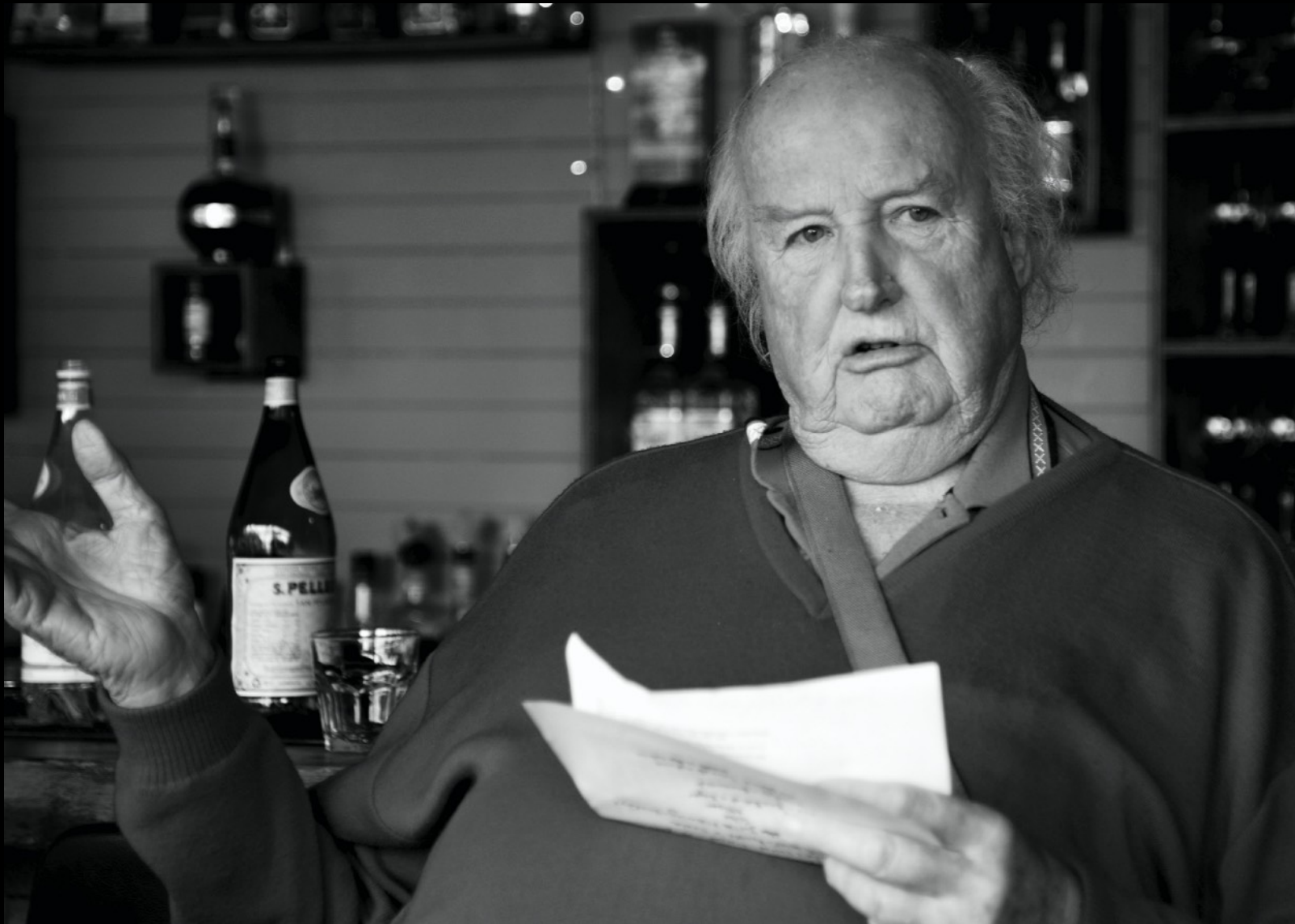
“BUTTERFLY BOY”

Extracts from this poem by Neville, which perhaps expresses his lifelong anguished quest for deep inner truth, possibly symbolised as a search for the elusive, rare, precious and magnificent Pasha butterfly. It also hints at man’s fatal hubris in so daring to see God’s face.



*“ See that Rock on mountain’s edge’,
Said Maurice pointing to a Ridge
Placed between two mountain tops.
Even on the hottest day
A cool breeze blows upon its face
And rewards the journey to the top.*

*‘it is a place beloved at times
By the Pasha butterfly.
They like the cool breeze in shade;
It is a hot and tiring climb
But almost sure you are to find
The Pasha in most gracious flight.’”*



*"It was hidden from his view
Just like that brooding Doomsday yew
All he knew was determined passion
To reach the rock that Maurice knew
And catch securely in his net
The two-tailed Pasha butterfly.*

*The boy he turned and noticed it
But flicked his head in dire contempt
Naught would stop his heart's intent
Of reaching to the Maurice mount
To catch inside his awful net
The beautiful Pasha butterfly."*



*“The hail was lashing at the stone
A gale thundered into him.
He gripped the Rock and held it tight
It was his only safety now
He was fluttering inside the net
The killing-bottle mocking him.*

*They found him limp nearby the Rock.
His body broken ‘cross its lap
Mother’s heart was desolate
She took the body, crying on it
Gazing sadly at the net
Lying all muddy, torn and wet.”*

The last time I saw Neville, he was in hospital, two days before he died. He wasn't feeling well. He was restless and uncomfortable. Unlike previous occasions, when he said he was not in any pain, this time he clearly was, but he didn't complain or say anything about it. But despite his discomfort he was as gracious as ever and expressed his gratitude for my visit. We didn't talk much and I quietly held his hand for a while. I sometimes stood and sometimes sat on his right. Behind me was a wide, wall to wall window, in front of which were placed the bouquets of flowers that visitors had brought. He lay mostly on his back, but he kept shifting and couldn't seem to find a comfortable position. He moved restlessly and finally, with some difficulty, found a comfortable position rolling over to his right. He closed his eyes and dozed off quietly. He slept for a little while and then he opened his eyes. Maybe because he was facing the window behind me, I noticed for the first time what soft, baby blue eyes he had. Many were the conversations that I'd had with him over the years, face to face, but I had never noticed that clear fresh blueness of his eyes. He looked steadily at the window for quite some time. I thought he was looking at the light streaming in. At last he said quietly to me, "They are lovely, those flowers, aren't they?" With that he closed his eyes again. They were the last words he said to me.

Those words and that moment have stayed with me. I will never know what he was feeling. He had been in a lot of discomfort and then briefly and ever so fleetingly, there had been a moment of reprieve and he was able to appreciate the light streaming in and the glory of the flowers - appreciative to the very end. Or maybe he experienced again a freedom of spirit, that same freedom that he had talked about so often, now with a flutter of butterfly wing-petals.

"Then we would watch the chrysalis carefully each day and if we were lucky, would be present when the the new creature broke out of its casing and crawled out with moist folded wings and then see its beautiful wings spread out to its full extent. I can still remember vividly a red admiral breaking out of its prison cell and slowly stretching its wet appendages and pumping air down them until a pair of beautiful wings shone in the light."

"A Different Path", 2016.





For Neville Symington

*flitting through
Porto vineyard dreams,
butterflies*

*riding the currents
of school Church and Tavistock,
butterflies*

*flickering as
thoughts books and lectures,
butterflies*

*freed by
"lovely, those flowers",
Pasha butterflies*

*bridging
our words across the Styx,
Pasha butterflies*