

Ode to a Minstrel
(a tribute to John Denver)

Poet, Musician, Writer; Teacher, Philosopher.

Mother Nature's Son, Lover of Humanity, Student of Life,
Champion of the Hungry Children,
Child of God.

By these names we called you; by your words I knew you.

Though many brushed you aside, and called you a sentimental country boy;
you touched the hearts, minds, and souls of the common people.

You weren't heavy metal, you weren't new age, you weren't rhythm and blues, or gospel.
You were reality, you were inspiration; you were a searcher, a proxy for us all.

Your songs were not just an autograph, but lessons for the people;
lessons of the heart, of life, love, caring, compassion,
loss, struggle, joy, excitement, wonder, and awe.

We were kindred spirits, you and I.
Through your search for space, I found mine;
through your eyes, mine were opened to possibilities;
through your words, I learned about myself;
through your music, you voiced my longings;
through your struggles, you told my story.

I walked your country roads, traced your crystal pathways in the snow;
felt your sunshine on my shoulders, and filled my senses with my lover and friend, my wife.

In your footsteps, we found ourselves.
You opened up a space for us to be.
You expressed emotions we couldn't voice.
You gave wings to hearts we kept contained.
You wrote down the words we couldn't share.

Though I never touched your hand, never shared with you a spoken word,
never sat with you beneath the stars, you became my counselor, teacher, and friend.

You were a companion at my campfire, a scholar in my easy chair, a song in my heart and mouth.

I am the friend you never knew, the student you never graded, the philosopher you never debated.

You may never have heard the answers to the questions, which you asked.
But you helped me find some answers, and a faith I know will last.
Only Jesus and my family know me better, only they share more of my soul.

I regret that I never met you face to face.
But I treasure the gifts you gave me, including the gift of space.

Farewell my friend, 'til we meet again; for the first time.

by Terrance L. Merriman
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