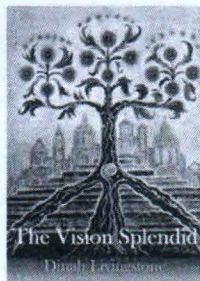# The Vision Splendid
Dinah Livingstone

Reviewed by
Frank Regan

One of the many functions of poetry is to remind us of how human we are, of how hungry we are for experience and of how thirsty we are for transcendence. Insofar as poetry is art, its principal function is to give delight. On all of the above this modest book of poems scores highly.

The keynote of the collection is sounded in the title, words taken from Wordsworth's Ode on Intimations of Immortality. It is also the guiding thread.

Her view parts from the particular to discover something grander and deeper. So she writes: The lust for the whole is overwhelming/ Now I can't see it/ I must console myself/ that the tree is still there and I can go/ and bow to it in the park.

She is in touch with our core energy: Love is everywhere on holiday/ and this afternoon how beautiful/ our languid, energetic species is, / communing and feasting together.

Despite the vision splendid, there is an everyday political reality which makes it difficult to see: Two toads squat in Downing Street.../ They hedge their millions craftily/ bank their securities/ while poisoning the body politic/ and spitting in the faces of the needy. Spot on!

She brings us to see London where someone "shat" near St. Paul's. But she wants us to see something else and quotes Ernesto Cardenal: After all God is also city...the free city where God is everybody.

Our poet walks us through all of life, pausing at certain nodal points which suggest that something else is happening or aborning. It is all so beautiful and so she has Don Cupitt say he will miss it from beyond the grave: I would be homesick in heaven and hanker. I beg to differ. He ain't seen nothing yet. I often wonder what made Steve Jobs, in his last moments, say: Wow! Oh wow!

Livingstone shares with us sightings and soundings of her surroundings - nature, animals, people, relationships, feelings etc. She makes connections and as the pages turn we are given a vision of a New City but not without seeing first the old city.