

The background of the entire page is a pattern of horizontal, wavy bands in a teal color, alternating with white space. The waves vary in width and curvature, creating a dynamic, organic feel.

Adon J Noda

**THE
BLUE
DOTS**

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My thanks

I am grateful to my friend Max, who read the manuscript, offered thoughtful advice, and encouraged me to continue. He respected my voice as a writer, making only careful and considered adjustments. Any remaining awkwardness in the text is mine alone.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to all who have supported me in the process of writing this book. My thanks go especially to my wife, who listened with patience as I shared my thoughts and drafts along the way.

To my family—my daughter, her husband, Melina and Mikael. Your steady presence has meant more than I can say. Your kindness and support have carried me through this work. I am deeply thankful to all of you who stood by me.

Nimikkeen automaattinen analysointi tietojen, erityisesti mallien, trendien ja korrelaatioiden, saamiseksi tekijänoikeuslain 13b § ("tekstin- ja tiedonlouhinta") mukaisesti on kielletty.

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Kustannustoimitus: Adon J Noda
Kannen suunnittelu: BoD-Books on Demand
Taitto / Sisus: Adon J Noda

Kustantaja: BoD · Books on Demand, Mannerheimintie 12 B, 00100 Helsinki,
bod@bod.fi
Kirjapaino: Libri Plureos GmbH, Friedensallee 273, 22763 Hampuri, Saksa

ISBN: 978-952-80-8843-1

This book is rooted in real places and a few real events, though every character within it is entirely fictional.

Adon J. Noda is an author who draws inspiration from the natural world and the depths of the human spirit. The Blue Dots is his first novel.

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Preface

Once upon a time. This is how tales usually begin. This is neither a tale nor a true story; it's just a story I'd like to write. There was an elderly man named John. He was an old man but not yet advanced in years-something that can be understood only by those who have reached that stage. He had a wife and a daughter who was married. She and her husband had two children, a girl and a wee boy. They all had names with a meaning, and quite soon you will recognize where they come from.

John was interested in theology because he believed in God. He loved God and his family and was fully committed to them. He had even made a covenant with his eyes not to look lustfully at young women.

The old man and his family lived far away from any towns or cities. They were not very poor; they lived in an old farmhouse deep in the forest, where life flowed gently in the stillness of nature. Although they lived in the wilderness, they did not eat locusts or wild honey, like John the Baptist did, because those did not be found at this latitude. Even though they were poor in

the eyes of the world, the Lord Almighty had given them everything they needed beyond measure.

The house was an old farmhouse with white siding, gleaming like a well-painted porch, and an old renovated wooden rocking chair. On the rocking chair was an heirloom: a woven rug made by Mary's grandmother. Surely, there were plenty of dust motes dancing in the light, but everything was in order. Still, there would be much work ahead in the farm buildings.

But they were a happy family because the sun rose every morning, and they got water from the well, vegetables from their garden, and grain from the fields. They had no car, and no microwave oven. They cooked their food on a wood-burning stove, and they baked their bread in a masonry oven. Quite often, when their shoes were worn out, they had to act as cobblers. The only thing they had to buy was salt, and they had salt for many years to come. We could say that they were amply supplied by God with everything they needed.

The First Calf of Summer

The sun was just cresting the horizon when Mark stepped into the barn. The crisp spring air nipped at his cheeks, but the interior held the familiar, heavy warmth of hay and livestock. Mary followed close behind, her barn scarf cinched tight to keep the scent of the stalls from clinging to her hair. "Milkshake was restless," Mary said, her voice low. "I checked her at two o'clock. The contractions have started." Mark nodded and hung a pocket light on his belt. "So, we'll get a new baby today. Hopefully everything goes fine." The cow stood on the straw bed, breathing heavily, its sides rising and falling deeply. It turned to look at them with broad, dark eyes.

"Good morning, Milkshake," Mary said gently and tapped its neck. "Don't worry, we're here to take care of you."

Milkshake let out a loud moo, as if answering them. Mark checked the gear: clean rope, towels, a bucket of luke-warm water, and some lubricant. Everything was ready in case help was needed.

"Its hooves are already out," Mary noticed as she bent down to look. "That's a good sign. The calf's front feet and head are in the right position."

Mark bent down as well. "It's moving pretty slow. We'd better help her."

Mary sighed. "Milkshake's an old cow by now. No wonder the labor's tough on her."

Milkshake pushed again; her sides trembled strongly. The

calf's hooves moved a little farther out but stopped again. "Okay," Mark said calmly. "Now we need a rope." He knelt on the straw and took the rope in his hand. He spoke softly while he worked, more to himself than to Milkshake.

"Let's take it slow. There's no rush."

Mary stood by Milkshake's head, holding her neck. "Good girl. We're helping you."

Mark looped the rope around the calf's hooves and checked the knots twice. "Not too tight... good."

"Do you remember when we helped Lily give birth?" Mary asked, perhaps to lighten the mood.

Mark smiled. "I sure do. She kicked me right in the head." he continued, "I got a dark bruise on my forehead., Okay... maybe that was a bit of an exaggeration," he laughed. Their talk paused as Milkshake pushed again. Mark got a good grip on the rope and inserted it in the right position. "I'll pull when she contracts." he said. "Are you ready?" Mary nodded and stroked the cow's neck. "Come on, girl. One big push and we're there."

As the next contraction came, Mark pulled the rope smoothly, slightly downwards. The calf slid out smoothly, inch by inch. Milkshake moed but stayed calm under Mary's touch.

"Great, Mark," Mary said. "It moves."

"Just a little more... here it comes... and—"

In an instant, the calf's wet brown body slid into the world. Mark caught it in his arms and laid it down on the straw. There was a silent moment in the barn; then the calf gave his first weak sound.

Mary smiled broadly. "Here it is, our first fruit of the summer."

Mark swept his brow. "And a good size...a big one. No wonder Milkshake had a hard labor."

"We did it together, you and me," Mary said. "You're right — last time your father was the one helping

and teaching us,” Mark pointed out.

Mary moved the calf farther away so it wouldn't start suckling from the cow's udder. This is an important step when dealing with a dairy cow. Mary took a bucket and milked some colostrum into it. She also took a bucket of water and washed the calf carefully.

Mark stretched his back and spoke. “Quite soon it will try to stand on its own feet.”

The calf tried to stand on its front legs but fell. It tried again with the same result. But after a few minutes, it stood on its shaking feet.

A moment like this is worth living in the wilderness,” Mark continued.

Mary lifted the bucket close to the calf's mouth and slipped her middle finger into its gums. When the calf began to suck her finger, she slowly lowered her hand into the milk and then pulled her finger away. The calf continued sucking and started drinking the milk from the bucket.

They stood in silence for a moment, watching the first tentative movements of new life. The morning sun peeked in through the window, filling the stall with golden light.

While they were lifting the calf into the stall, Mark said, “It's time for a coffee break, I suppose. We've earned it.”

They left the barn and stepped into the house, where the fresh scent of coffee and pancakes welcomed them. Elisabeth had also brewed coffee for Milkshake. It was their custom to give coffee to cows after a calf was born.

Luke and Martha had already woken up, even though it was still early. Luke was sitting at the table, drawing a picture of a little calf. His big sister Martha, curious as always, was standing by the window, peeking outside. Their grandfather was sitting in his favorite chair, reading the morning paper. “Mom!” Martha exclaimed when she saw her parents. “Has she had the calf yet? Is it a boy or a girl?” Luke dropped his pen on the table. “Is it a small one? Can I go see it?”

“Sure you can, but one thing at a time. The calf was born an

hour ago. Everything went fine, and we have a baby bull now,” Mary laughed, taking off her barn gear. Elisabeth turned to look at them with a frying pan in her hand. “How wonderful. How is Milkshake doing?” “She’s doing fine; everything went well, though I had to pull him out,” Mark replied.

John set the newspaper on the table. “Great. Good job, both of you. Is the calf big and healthy?”

“He’s big and healthy.” Mark informed his father-in-law. Martha asked impatiently, “What color is he?”

“He’s brown with a white stripe on his forehead,” Mary answered. “He’s already standing on his legs.”

While Luke hurried putting his boots on and asked, “Can we go see him?”

“Sure,— but we have to eat first,” Mary answered sturdily and sat down at the table.

Luke and Martha ate quickly and wanted to leave, but their father refused to let them go without their parents. Once everyone was ready, they all went together. Even Elisabeth and John wanted to see a new arrival.

Martha opened the door cautiously and peeked into the barn. Warm, straw-scented air greeted her. She stepped inside, Luke right behind her. Milkshake turned her head and greeted them with a low sound, then turned her gaze back to the standing calf.

“Children, come in,” Mary said.

Martha looked over the stall’s edge at the calf and exclaimed, “He’s so cute!”

Luke rose onto his toes to see better. “He’s wet and cold,” he commented.

“He’ll dry soon,” Mark calmed.

The calf stood on his shaky legs and tried to take a few steps.

He’s a pretty strong bull, ”John said quietly. He didn’t yet know how right he was—or what that strength would unleash.

“What’s his name?” Luke asked, reaching out to stroke the calf’s soft snout.

“Wow... that’s a big question,” Martha said and winked at her father.

“But we’ll figure it out soon,” her mother said hesitantly.

“I’d like to name him... Marty. His name is Marty,” Luke said solemnly a smile on his lips.

The little calf was nuzzling Luke’s fingers, sucking them greedily. From that moment on, the bull’s name was Marty. Luke went to the barn every day with his mother and fed hay to his calf. Marty ate well and grew into a strong bull. John felt a small cold shiver run down his spine. It was a strange sensation, like a silent warning that even though life had just begun, it wouldn’t be all sunshine and warm breezes. One day Marty would no longer be small and gentle, and then his endurance would be tested.

A shed

Firewood was never a problem because there was plenty of it in the forest. When they bought the estate, some buildings were in a dilapidated condition, but they have since been repaired, except for the firewood shed. The roof of the old shed had collapsed long ago, and John had split the remains for firewood. Without a proper shed, the wood was never dry enough; damp firewood burned inefficiently and produced a significant amount of smoke. He had harbored the idea of building a new woodshed ever since they had bought the estate. So, John decided to build it.

John made a list of the materials they needed. He went with his son-in-law to the nearby village and purchased three types of nails, a pair of hinges, and two rolls of roofing felt. The next morning, he started work in the forest. He selected trees about 15 cm in diameter and felled them. He bucked each log into four-meter lengths and peeled off the bark. John then hewed the logs to a uniform thickness along their entire length, but only on opposite sides. The other two sides were left in their natural, round state.

He was tired, so he sat to rest for a while. He had to admit that the scythe of time had taken its toll, but not even the pesky mosquitoes managed to ruin his mood at that moment. The birds' chirping made him feel joyful. John loved to build, and the freshly peeled wood smelled wonderful. Once all the wood was felled and

peeled, he left the logs to dry while he commenced the shed's foundation. A foundation is necessary for every building, even a small one like a firewood shed. When he began digging, the day was perfect, with blue skies and swallows wheeling around the house. However, the soil was hard. He dug four holes in the ground—one for each corner of the shed. They had to be one meter deep and forty centimeters in diameter. The first hole went well, but while digging the second, the shovel hit a stone. He fetched a tool that looked like a hexagonal digging bar, one end of which was forged square and pointed. It had been designed and made for fieldwork. Before he started prying the stone, he widened the hole until he found the edge of the rock. He tried to pry the stone, but the soil gave way. He had to place a piece of wood between the bar and the edge of the pit for leverage. With sufficient power, the stone was loosened. Hitting the stone had brought flashing lights to the old fellow's vision. John was filthy with dust and sweat. Some coffee and a nap would be invigorating, he pondered.

Mary was pouring coffee into the thermos when John stepped into the room. The fresh scent of coffee filled the air. He wiped his forehead with the back of his hand and sat down at the table.

"Sounds like you knew I was coming," John said. "I heard the bar hit the stone," Mary replied with a small smile. "Figured it was the perfect moment for coffee."

"You're right about that. That stone sits there like it's been rooted in the ground for a hundred years." Mary placed a mug in front of her father. "You never give up, Dad. You're still strong, but you're not thirty

The Blue Dots – Faith, Family, and the Strength to Heal
Deep within the quiet embrace of the forest, life follows the timeless rhythms of nature. From the birth of a spring calf to the shared labor of the woodpile, the farm is a sanctuary of self-reliance and peace. But a shadow falls over this tranquil world when John, the family patriarch, is diagnosed with cancer.

The Blue Dots is a moving and evocative story about resilience, forgiveness, and the bonds that hold a family together. As a "prodigal brother" returns with secrets of his own and modern medicine brings new uncertainties, John must lean on his faith and the love of his kin.

In this debut novel, Adon J. Noda masterfully weaves together vivid descriptions of the northern wilderness, profound spiritual reflection, and a realistic portrayal of a medical journey. It is a tribute to life, love, and the "blue dots" of hope that guide us through our darkest hours.

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