

Ann

10 poems for my daughter

Bill Eberle



Cover Photo

Orange Tangle May 25, 2003 Waterman Beach, Maine © 2003, 2023 William C. Eberle Fujifilm FinePix S602 ZOOM, 1/350 sec, f/3.5, ISO 200, 23.9 mm

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for

my daughter Ann

who was born on June 22, 1973 and died at the end of January in 2010

and

my son Ben

who was born on August 17, 1979

Forward

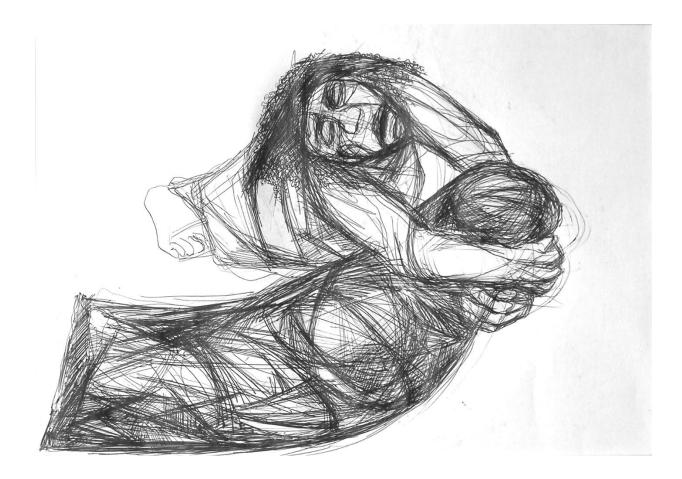
Writing poetry helps me remember, helps me reach out to what cannot be reached and, somehow in the process of caring and attempting an impossible connection, heal.

Bill Eberle

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photo, sculptures simple altar 1 at Christmas © 2014, 2023 William C. Eberle
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photo, sculptures <i>simple altar 2 at Christmas</i> © 2014, 2023 William C. Eberle



The Warrior Returns Home

© 2010, 2023 Alan Hynd

Ann's ashes

Ann's ashes are in the place she wished them to be

If you go to Truro, head of the Pamet, Ballston Beach the gentle slope to the beach is gone

You'll carefully descend the steep wash of sand or perhaps new wooden steps by the time you get there

Go right

South down the beach a little ways and let your spirit reach out

Ann's ashes are there in the place she wished them to be

> It was a wild bright windy day when she returned and at snow pond too where we all swam and we all laughed ...

there too she returned a small part of herself to our memory and our grief

Her grief is gone

Mixed with air light and water in the place she wished to be

May 2010

by the throat

I want to grab God by its throat

by the gullet of its existence and non existence

by the cause and effect of its ripples through time

its havoc in the lives of people I love and loved

April 3, 2012

Ibsen's fire

they burned my child

each piece and every page burned

and she died alone my child

I've tried to forgive them

not for their sakes but for mine

not much progress there but I try

> I haven't lost my ability to love

a miracle of being older and wiser

good people are easy to love

the others can be treated kindly or avoided even so the loss of my child is endless

for the most part I don't think of or believe in God

> in something but not God Holy Spirit maybe

but mostly life the good parts and the bad parts

> it's real it all happens

> > and I live through it

> > for awhile at least

and that's God and Heaven and Hell enough for me

here is another small fact

when my daughter died

my child

fear was born

fear that people I love the most will be taken away

that I'll lose them in some stupid way when I least expect it

> so I always expect it

expect that my love will have to do that one more time

- encompass death again encompass being to not being in me
- whenever my wife goes on a trip or drives off as far as a couple of towns away

I'm afraid

. . .

and I pray directly to a God who probably doesn't exist

and I include the others I love the most the one's I think might need protecting

> two alive but not in my life

two no longer living my sister gone wherever perhaps to nowhere but somehow safe and my daughter who may not be

> and one the first name in my prayer

the one I pray for to protect myself the one still here with me

I say God please protect her please bring her home safe and then because the connection is valuable my reaching out to a nothing that feels like something the state of my mind and heart helpless but active

and I say God take care of my child hold her and protect her then I say protect and I say my second wife's name and sometimes I say protect and I say my son's name and sometimes more words and names come tumbling out

> tumbling in I mean into me

my consciousness

when it stops I say thank you

I like it . . . that in those few moments of my thoughts my prayer the God I don't believe in has power everywhere in each world

> life and death and distance love and fear are no different

and each can be touched as one

June 3 and 4, 2012

edited August 27, 2012 and February 4, 2023

But I sure do

I know it's childish and I don't believe it *but I sure do wish it*

my most hoped for prayer

> not possible probably

but hoped for felt deep

like all the human cells and all the microorganisms which are my greater part are feeling and hoping for this foolish wish *to be true*

> like we're all on the same wave

I can imagine it

dream it

...

I die

and there they all are

everyone I most want to see

each one knowing how much I love them

> and I'm there with them

and there is no end

I know it's childish and I don't believe it *but I sure do wish it*

November 6, 2012

crack you open

it's amazing how family can crack you

open

so the sorrow pours in

how you can be

ok

one minute

defending your sanity

and then slowly

the sorrow seeps in

May 21, 2013

and we cried

wonderful trees along the rim of the Grand Canyon

> touched some

and listened

one of the trees I touched lurched inside me

> absorbed my grief

> > and we cried

May 18, 2013

sorrow

if you embrace your depression and your sorrow

> I mean hug it and squeeze it tight

sometimes out of nowhere

> it will burst

into song

June 3, 2013

Becoming Buddha

We are I am such such a fools fool

thinking feeling she's dead now I'm dead now

I just saw her eyes her face

it was her my daughter who died her heart stopped my heart stopped

she rotted I rotted from early Saturday until Monday morning

from when they told me on and on we moldered

> thinking feeling knowing

she's dead now

I'm dead now

and on and on until

she came to me as ashes

and I spread her ashes her ashes my ashes on and on and on at the edge of the Atlantic down south in Truro

and I lived and died at the edge of the Atlantic in a small town in Maine

our bigger non selves our wonderful terrible ocean

oceans and oceans I am we are so small so big vast and endless

as we become sand to ocean to sky to past this small bubble of life and death

space and universe

and on and on until now

I just saw her eyes her face We are I am such such a fools fool

I've waited for so long to see her eyes to look into her eyes

again

sobbing my water

to hers

2013 August 23, 6:37 morning

Messiah

this small church is seven eighths full of singers

> if there is a god it's woven in their one voice

one or no rehearsal and all have flocked to sing Messiah

> we few to listen

and feel the weave of so many voices glimpse in the spaces separating each note each throat what lifts us all through hell to heaven and back

In sublime pain of memory I attempt to thread my prayer my spirit's reach to my daughter who died the powerful voices soar every type all together in one piece

anything is possible

the instruments cry out the solos move us forward in human script

the multitude chorus wraps us

church light dark and all into other dimensions

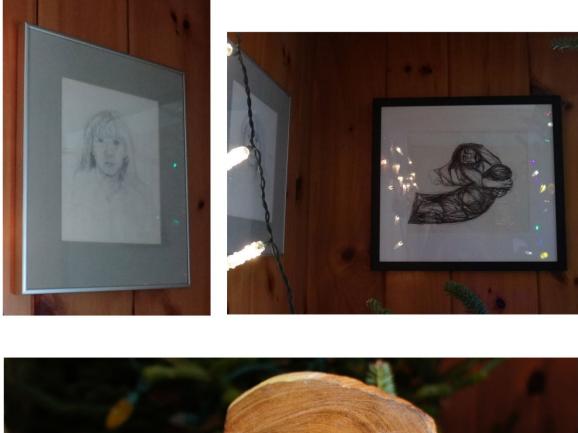
> every cell in me and around me is alive

buoyed between and upon the great joining of voice the rolling wave of music

there between within each space my heart stops and I see behind my eyelids the colors of my prayers

evening, December 16, 2014 The Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist

in Thomaston Maine





to Ann

We sleep upstairs in the northwest corner

> next door a single bed

northeast corner room to which my wife escapes walking without waking when I snore

> and to which I retreat when I can't sleep

or wake with a poem to write

> quietly rising and moving east while she sleeps in the west

> > my star

Downstairs in the southwest corner is your altar a backless chair with the large left stereo speaker

I had it when you were a baby and I walked you round and round the table until you could let go of your fierce battles and finally sleep

On top of the speaker an arrangement of two small wood carvings

> and one large carved juniper piece from out west where you lived for awhile then died

curving around a group of poor man's gems beach stones

each unique

and cherished placed and connected to its neighbors and the bits of wood to make your altar

> my ceremony to shuffle each to where my heart says it should go now

they are together a much loved ancient family

In the same corner on the south wall is a pencil drawing I did of you when you were twelve or so

you look so sad

I didn't know why when I captured just a little of who you were in two dimensions but now I know more about why you suffered

what drove you to such unhappy life

the drawing of your sadness is the south wall of your altar

On the west wall is another pencil drawing

by an admired friend an old man farmer sailor musician and artist

> a violent lament showing a robed middle eastern mother or father

a human being

weeping in despair

holding her his dead child You own and my memory and prayer own the altar I maintain for you in the living room's southwest corner

From the room in the northwest corner my office I look past my work to your picture

see your face

Ah but now it's December and your corner is transformed

the speaker with its set piece of pebbles stones and wood is moved north

along the west wall with its large window overlooking bird and squirrel feeders thorny bush wild havens woods and stream

replaced by a tree we've carefully chosen cut and brought home to decorate with lights and ornaments to make our hearts glad

I wrote this poem to let you know

each year the southwest corner for your altar

becomes a celebration

of life

December 20 and 21, 2014 Thomaston, Maine











Thank you

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