

A photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, there is a large, round, light-colored shell, possibly a scallop, and a small crab. The background is filled with seaweed and other beach debris. The text is overlaid on the image.

Ann
10 poems for my daughter

by
Bill Eberle

Ann

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Bill Eberle

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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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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

other PDF books of poetry by Bill Eberle

Sue 4 poems for my sister

10 Love Poems

Where we live and other poems

2012 23 Poems

Going Out Vacation Poems

A Graduation 6 spontaneous poems

3 Days in Arizona and more in Maine

perhaps poetry & digital art

Sue 8 poems for my sister



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