

### ***"Eulogy from a Physicist"***

By Aaron Freeman

You want a physicist to speak at your funeral. You want the physicist to talk to your grieving family about the conservation of energy, so they will understand that your energy has not died. You want the physicist to remind your sobbing mother about the first law of thermodynamics; that no energy gets created in the universe, and none is destroyed. You want your mother to know that all your energy — every vibration, every bit of heat, every wave of every particle that was her beloved child — remains with her in this world. You want the physicist to tell your weeping father that amid energies of the cosmos, you gave as good as you got.

And at one point you'd hope that the physicist would step down from the pulpit and walk to your brokenhearted spouse there in the pew and tell him that all the photons that ever bounced off your face, all the particles whose paths were interrupted by your smile, by the touch of your hair, hundreds of trillions of particles, have raced off like children, their ways forever changed by you. And as your widow rocks in the arms of a loving family, may the physicist let her know that all the photons that bounced from you were gathered in the particle detectors that are her eyes, that those photons created within her constellations of electromagnetically charged neurons whose energy will go on forever.

And the physicist will remind the congregation of how much of all our energy is given off as heat. There may be a few fanning themselves with their programs as he says it. And he will tell them that the warmth that flowed through you in life is still here, still part of all that we are, even as we who mourn continue the heat of our own lives.

And you'll want the physicist to explain to those who loved you that they need not have faith; indeed, they should not have faith. Let them know that they can measure — that scientists have measured precisely — the conservation of energy and found it accurate, verifiable and consistent across space and time. You can hope your family will examine the evidence and satisfy themselves that the science is sound and that they'll be comforted to know your energy's still around. According to the law of the conservation of energy, not a bit of you is gone; you're just less orderly. Amen

### ***"Something Beautiful Remains"***

Author Unknown

The tide recedes but leaves behind  
bright seashells on the sand.  
The sun goes down, but gentle  
warmth still lingers on the land.  
The music stops, and yet it echoes  
on in sweet refrains.....  
For every joy that passes, something beautiful remains.

### ***Untitled***

By John Stuart Mill

Human existence is girt round with mystery: the narrow region of our experience is a small island in the midst of a boundless sea. To add to the mystery, the domain of our earthly existence is not only an island of infinite space, but also in infinite time. The past and the future are alike shrouded from us: we neither know the origin of anything which is, nor its final destination.

## **"Remember Me"**

By Margaret Mead

Remember Me:

To the living, I am gone. To the sorrowful, I will never return.  
To the angry, I was cheated, but to the happy, I am at peace,  
And to the faithful, I have never left.

So as you stand upon a shore, gazing at a beautiful sea — remember me.  
As you look in awe at a mighty forest and its grand majesty — remember me.  
As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity — remember me.  
Remember me in your heart, your thoughts, your memories of the times we loved,  
the times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed.  
For if you always think of me, I will never be gone.

## **Mama**

By Patricia Lynn Reilly

*I took my mother to the beach today.*

*Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.*

In a container, carefully prepared in New Jersey, where her life ended.

In a container, carefully carried to California, where I began,

thrust from my young mother's womb, many years ago.

*I laughed with my mother at the beach today.*

*Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.*

Wondered if I'd be sad.

Supposed to be sad, my mother's dead.

All that's left are her ashes, cremains they're called.

Laughter, however, was her final blessing.

Enough tears had been shed.

*The wind danced with my mother at the beach today.*

*Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.*

As I held out each handful of cremains to scatter them,

the wind picked my mother up

and danced playfully with her across the beach.

And then gently laid her down to final rest,

one handful at a time.

*A little girl kissed my mother at the beach today.*

*Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.*

A little girl picked up a shell.

"Is this your mother?" "Yes," I said.

She kissed the shell and gave it to me: "Kiss her."

A kiss, my final blessing.

*I kissed my mother at the beach today.*

*Ashes to ashes and dust to dust.*

***"Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep"***

By Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep;  
I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.  
I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush,  
I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circled flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;  
I am not there. I did not die.

***Poem: After a Funeral***

By Dave Hood

At a coffee shop, following a funeral,  
for a friendly neighbor, an elderly woman  
who died from long time afflictions  
of dementia,

The type of event that inspires one  
to ponder life's big questions,  
the believer and agnostic sit and chat  
over comforting, hot beverages.

The believer, an elderly man, with scraggly  
grey beard and white hair,  
War veteran, widow, self educated,  
reader of spiritual wisdom,  
sips hot chocolate,

while the agnostic, a young man,  
a deep thinker, with cropped hair,  
casually attired in blue jeans  
Polo shirt, black leather jacket,

enrolled in philosophy of existentialism,  
lover of Sartre, dreaming of graduating,  
a writer for one of the media corporations,  
with lots of clout, savors a gourmet latte.

They engage in a philosophical discussion—  
a metaphysical question—  
Does God exist?

The believer vehemently argues  
without equivocation,  
For the existence of the divine:  
"He speaks to me, answering my prayers,  
guides me on the journey of life,

Through the wildness of difficult decisions,  
past the weeds of hardship,  
beyond the jagged rocks of misfortune,  
points me in the proper direction  
when there's a fork in the road,  
To sustenance, where there's usually  
peace of mind."

The agnostic listens with eager attention,  
thinks to himself:  
God has never spoken to me.  
Logic and reason strongly suggest  
To me that God doesn't exist.  
Just a construct of the mind.

When the believer completes his sermon,  
The agnostic diplomatically comments:  
"Whether the divine exists  
Or not  
is one of the great mysteries  
of human existence. We shall never  
absolutely know, until we depart this world."