

How Do I Kill Somebody Who Is Already Dead? et al

By

Milton P. Ehrlich

WHY I LIKE IT: Poetry Editor HEZEKIAH writes... *You just gotta love Dr. Milton P. Ehrlich, he's sneaky-sly in his Bio, sighting previous works published, he tosses off 'and the New York Times' in the end. I wish I had the face to be that self-eating. As a psychologist, no less, it is difficult reading his case without bowing to his, let us say, grace. . . . In 'HOW DO I KILL SOMEONE WHO IS ALREADY DEAD?' we find Milton still jealously protecting the honour of his wife, in spite of her having gone to, forgive me, a better place, "beyond the beyond." Bearing in mind that Ehrlich is writing this at the age of ninety, "I could polish up my martial art skills and easily / discourage any spiritual dudes bothering my wife." There is no fine line between being possessive and being possessed in 'FINAL EXIT' either: "Crossing over should be fun. / You promised to wait for me," Don't miss the lovely lines in between either, even if your tear ducts don't need a good cleaning. . . ."As soon as / I find her, I will envelop her / with loving kisses and caresses / as if we never left our home." And just when you thought pheromones springing from unperfumed pages doesn't make sense 'WHAT LOVE SMELLS LIKE' is a musk-read, I won't spoil a line for you, savor its fragrance yourself. Even 'I CAUGHT A FISHHOOK IN MY EYE' offers phrases like "Stars in the Milky Way turned into a smile." Kerr and Grant couldn't hold a candle to this '...Affair to Remember' . . . I wonder if she has a younger sister . . . (Spacing is poet's own.)*

HOW DO I KILL SOMEONE WHO IS ALREADY DEAD?

When my dying wife said: *I will wait for you—*
I didn't realize she might have to deal with other
men attracted to her before I ever got to join her.
Then I realized the dead leave their bodies
when they travel to the world beyond the beyond.
I also remembered my Akido training after getting
mugged on Riverside Drive many years ago.
I could polish up my martial art skills and easily
discourage any spiritual dudes bothering my wife.

FINAL EXIT

I really just want to keep swimming
in my ocean of tears, but I remember
what my angry First Sargent yelled
at me when I asked to go on sick call
to treat my infected shrapnel wound:
*Soldier, do you want to soldier or
Fuck around? Get back in line!*

The last words of my dying wife
were: *I'm never going anywhere
without you, and I will wait for you.*
I decided to tap-dance my way
in if it's a sunny day, and if it's
raining, I will do my Gene Kelly
routine of singing in the rain.
Crossing over should be fun.
You promised to wait for me,
and all I have to do is follow
your trail of words left around
on antique bottles and tools,
and anything interesting like
sexy shaped trees or rocks
that have charm. As soon as
I find her, I will envelop her
with loving kisses and caresses
as if we never left our home.

MY MUTINOUS FIRST MATE

Jumped overboard before me,
leaving me to cry the 3 rivers dry
from the tidal estuaries of—
Brudenell, Cardigan and Montague,
rivers that flowed into Saint Mary's Bay.
I spent the happiest days of my life
with my chest puffed up like Captain Bly,
getting my Boston Whaler underway across
the bay to Boughton Island. She stood at the
bow, her hair flowing in the wind, moments
before she exclaimed to me: *I will wait for you,*
and dove into the sea.

WHAT LOVE SMELLS LIKE

Love always smells like ambrosia.
It's far better than any perfume
or flower and is only created by
the feelings in a loving heart.
The best scented wildflowers—
freesia, hyacinth and jasmine
are no match for the ardor
of the male and female body.
Mating humans emit the elixir
of passion ever since we swam
out of the aquatic home of the
past, intoxicating us with lust.
We growl and prowl for the
best smelling mate, pounding
one's chest and howling as if
one's life depended on it.
Napoleon had an acute sense
of smell, and wrote many letters
asking his wife, Josephine, not to
bathe when he came home.
He wanted to enjoy to the fullest
his wife's sexy body odor.

I CAUGHT A FISHHOOK IN MY EYE

I didn't even know I was underwater.
My stars must have been out of alignment.
I could hear temple bells fading from away,
Where was I going and who snagged me?
Only creatures in the earth of my garden knew
as I noticed my flowers nodding in agreement.
Stars in the Milky Way turned into a smile.
Somebody somewhere must know what is going on?
My heart beat faster as I dug in my garden to save my life.
Only the worms volunteered to pray for me.

THE POET SPEAKS: *I am inspired by memories of growing up in Queens, New York in the 1930s, the experience of being a Jewish kid during a time of virulent antisemitism. My poems are also informed by having been born on the wings of the Great Depression, and growing up in a household where money was often tight, but my memories are suffused with the warmth of my*

mother's home cooked meals, and spending time camping and fishing with my father. The themes of sex and death pervade my poems, and having recently lost my wife after 67 years of happy marriage, loss and grief are now present in nearly every word I write.

I am not attracted to poetry that uses complex language to obfuscate meaning, or where I am unable to plainly grasp the meaning. Instead, my style of writing is often closer to prose. The poets I admire most—Billy Collins, William Carlos Williams—are writers who use every day language in a masterful and original way. That's what I aspire to do, even at the age of 90 and I am still learning.

AUTHOR BIO: Milton P. Ehrlich Ph.D. is a 90-year-old psychologist and a veteran of the Korean War. He has published many poems in periodicals such as the London Grip, Arc Poetry Magazine, Descant Literary Magazine, Wisconsin Review, Red Wheelbarrow, Christian Science Monitor, and the New York Times.

