

The Morning After You Died

Category: Poems

written by Dianne Avey | January 26, 2018

Dianne Avey ~

So this is what it feels like
to be on the other side.
Hollowed out exhaustion,
rimmed with the chaotic clutter
of struggle and hope.

Like the beach after a tsunami,
all those once-important items,
now floating around uselessly.

I don't know how to start this life
again.

This morning, they came
and took the bed away.
Left behind are a few traces:
syringes, a yellow notepad—
with the neatly checked off schedule
of morphine,
a crayon drawing from our six-year-old—
one large and one small stick figure
holding hands,
looking out toward a rainbow.

On the tile floor, a pile of white sheets,
still damp with your sweat and urine,
a few dots of blood—evidence
that you did live,
and you did die,
here in our home,
in a bed overlooking the bay.

Where storms blew
in from the west
over Devil's Head,
where you loved to fish,

and where I can still see you turn and
walk back across the grass to us,
smiling.

About the poet:

Dianne Avey lives in the Pacific Northwest and is a fifth-generation resident of Anderson Island, Puget Sound's southernmost island. She writes poetry when

she can—often on the ferry, while commuting to her job as a nurse practitioner. Her poems and essays have appeared in [Pulse](#), [Wrist Magazine](#), [Oasis](#), [The Poetry Box](#), [Kind of a Hurricane Press](#) and elsewhere. She is finishing her first chapbook, *Impossible Ledges*, which tells a true story of grief and recovery; its themes are nature, illness, caregiving and a love that transcends death in tangible ways.

About the poem:

“This poem portrays the sense of exhaustion and chaos that I felt the morning after my husband passed away following a long battle with leukemia. As a former hospice nurse, I felt comfortable with the dying process, but going through it with my own husband, in our home, gave me a whole new perspective on the energy—both physical and emotional—that this takes. It truly takes a village, and with the help of family and friends, I was grateful to help him have his last wish—to die peacefully in our home surrounded by love.”

Poetry editors:

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer