

This 78F Adelphi U. student of mine (in "Interpersonal Behavior"), who in mid-life has had "more than his share of" [whatever that means] pain and trouble, did not like the fact that his teacher was "religious" until he experienced my religion as saying yes both to nature and to his suffering. Then, picking up my image of "dying into," his was able, without "religious language," to say--poetically, not prosaically or credally--this YES to the God of Life against Death. In his turn-off on religious language, he was typical in the group. My conclusion: We must learn to make an end-run around religious language, as well as reinforcing the fundamental biblical language when/wherever possible.

1982: I have learned that this poem is going the rounds of HOSPICE centers. Its open, intransitive, prepositions (1) affirm without (2) defining: it is language used to open on the Transcendent, rather than to close on Doctrine --the latter being the usual, and important, use.

Dying Into

Death is to be feared  
Or revered  
Depending on if you die away from  
Or die into

If you die away from loved ones  
Never to see them again  
If you die away from sunshine  
To dwell entomed in darkness  
If you die away from the scents of seasons  
The churning tides, the rolling hills  
Death is the awesome pain of hollow void  
Of knowing but not hearing  
Life's circus' shout  
While suffocating below ground

But if you die into  
You fuse with essence of all being  
Becoming greenness of leaves  
The purpleness and icyness of peaks  
The thrilling glint of sunspecks  
Reflecting from whitecaps in brisk spring seas  
The breeze filling sails of distant hulls  
Gliding sunsetward  
You become the force that grows the garden  
Of those you love  
And become them  
You become all sunshine  
All moonbeams  
The sound humming silently in all things  
You become the smile of being  
Sighing all feeling  
If you die not away  
But into

--Ambrose J. Bono  
79-20 149th, Flushing NY 11367

To Willis with best wishes. This is a copy of my poem which I mentioned in class. The idea is probably better than the poem. I hope you find something in it that you like besides the title.

*Ambrose*

over

1/29/79

Dr. Willis Elliott  
c/o New York Theological Seminary  
5 West 29th St.  
New York, N.Y. 10001

Dear Willis,

Today I picked up my material and also received your letter. I was delighted that you thought enough of my poem to want to publish it and double-delighted that it found its way into a think sheet. You may publish my poem anyway or anywhere you see fit to do so.

Thank you for your comments and think sheets, and thank you for the copy of the piece by Woodward in Newsweek.  
Congradulations from my wife and me.

Best wishes,

*Ambrose*

Ambrose