

1945

It took me a long time to figure out
what had happened

It was before I was born
but I was alive . . . 105 days waiting to be born

*look at the international dateline
west to east Tuesday becomes Monday*

. . . Syracuse . . . New York
Summer . . . 1945
. . . and a memory that haunted me for years
about a moment in that day or night
and what happened on a carrier out in the Pacific

I didn't understand it . . . *but it happened to me too*

Made up from stories I'd heard
or real

*a flash of experience from him to me
either way*

I remembered

*the instant of the wound
that death that took all night
dragged on then ended
my uncle's life*

. . . my grandmother said she woke up
with a splitting headache that lasted all night
. . . when the headache went away
she knew her son was dead

. . . my father, the older brother,
thought

"It should have been me."

Maybe I absorbed that too.

I was born on a Monday at the end of October
West to East . . . Tuesday becomes Monday

One summer night when I was 19, I woke with a vision
And, after that, I began to believe

"This is my last year."

Odd thoughts for a young man

*"Why am I alive?" "I'm supposed to be dead."
"Why?" . . . "This year, then, will be the year I die."*

Ignored; forgotten . . . felt

Deep inside me . . . year after year

When I first remembered what had happened
it was a memory of something that had actually happened
to me
*whirling blades,
closer and closer; hitting, cutting*

It was real and it happened again

I screamed and screamed

Elinor was there we'd pulled out two other
buried, frozen memories

I'd learned the mistakes a child's mind can make
and lock inside real facts, re-felt
 understood differently
no longer hopeless brought out
 forgiven
 accepted
put back in a different way healing

But this, the most terrible memory, remained a mystery
What had happened? What did it mean?

Much later . . . it seemed to finally come together
A question from me

"Where did that memory about the cutting blades come from?"

Some odd rituals . . . a trance . . . a possibility
A call and a revelation.

When I heard the date of his death
I felt like I knew what had happened

I thought

*"The memory was real."
"Somehow . . . for some reason
as he received the wound that killed him
he reached out and found me in the womb."*

West to east
Somewhere inside I stopped believing

"You're not supposed to be alive."

Somewhere inside, I started breathing

Now, even later . . . Monday October 18

Tuesday October 19 out there

and . . . *I don't know*

But however it happened

I remembered

It happened to me too

2010 Bill Eberle (William Caveny Eberle)
for my uncle Bill (William Caveny Eberle, Jr.)
Ensign Naval Aviator, US Navy Reserve, USS Hancock
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