

Ibsen's fire

they burned my child

each piece
and every page
burned

and she died alone
my child

I've tried
to forgive them

not for their sakes
but for mine

not much progress
there
but I try

I haven't lost
my ability
to love

a miracle
of being older
and wiser

good people
are easy to love

the others
can be treated
kindly
or avoided

even so
the loss of my child
is endless

for the most part
I don't think of

or believe in
God

in something
but not God
Holy Spirit
maybe

but mostly
life
the good parts
and the bad parts

it's real
it all happens
and I live
through it

for awhile
at least

and that's
God and
Heaven
and Hell
enough
for me

here is another
small fact

when my
daughter died

my child

fear was born

fear that
people I love the most
will be taken away

that I'll lose

them
in some
stupid way
when I least
expect it

so I always
expect it

expect
that my love
will have to do that
one more time

encompass
death
again
encompass
being to not being
in the same circle

whenever
my wife goes
on a trip
or drives off
as far as a couple of towns
away
I'm afraid

...

and I pray
directly to a God
who probably doesn't
exist

and I include
the others
I've loved
the most
who I think
need protecting

two alive
but not in my life

two no longer living
my sister
gone wherever
perhaps to nowhere
but somehow safe
and my daughter
who may not be

and one

the first name
in my prayer

the one
I pray for
to protect myself
the one
still here
with me

I say God
please protect her
please bring her
home safe

and then
because the connection
is valuable
my reaching out
to a nothing
that feels like something
the state of my mind
and heart helpless
but active

and I say God
take care of my child
hold her and protect her
and then I say protect

and I say
my second wife's name
and sometimes I say
protect
and I say my son's name
and sometimes
more names
come tumbling out
and when it stops I say
thank you

I like it that
in those few moments
of my thoughts my prayer
the God I don't believe in
has power in each
world

life and death
and distance
love and fear
are no different

and each
can be touched
as one

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