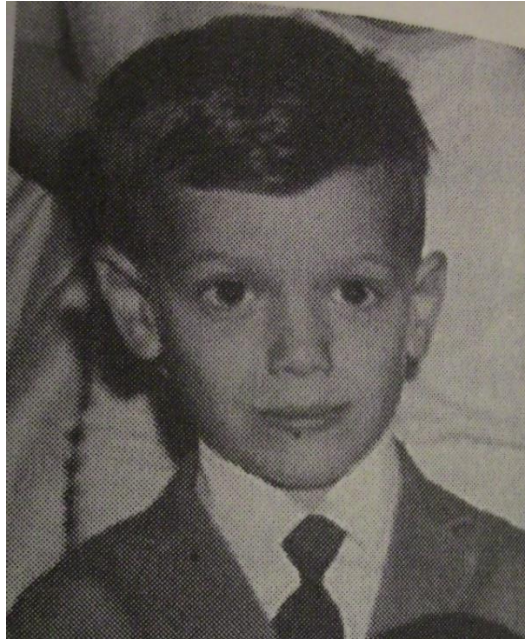


An ode of sorts to my 24,445th sunrise

by Kevin Annett



I'd like to say it's a breeze to breathe a billion times,
or to be or not to be, in these less than perfect climes.
But you know as well as do I, that our life is a series of tests,
Either issued by conscious design, or a great, rather odd cosmic jest.

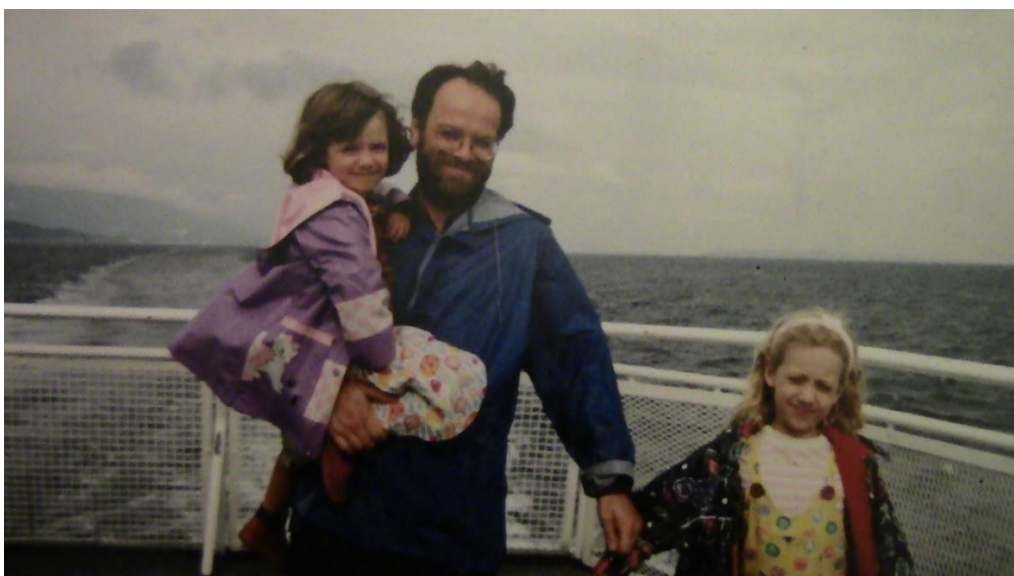
The boys in my old neighborhood had a sport that they relished real good,
Each prairie dog tail would without fail mean a dime from a farmer named Wood.
I was offered some of this largesse and a chance to show my switchblade prowess,
But the sight of the carnage infused me with outrage and tears at the sickening mess.

My parents protested the blood fest, and tried to put it to rest. But all that that did
was to piss off the kids, and their parents, who made sure the Annetts were got rid.
So I learned at a rather young age what it means to endure a big shunning, for
acceptable crimes and all their earned dimes are what keeps the entire show running.

The stakes grew much higher of course, for sliced rodents were but the first course. And so over time I followed the grime through church doors to its dark, fetid source. The long years have caused me to wonder what led me there, to be torn asunder. It was more than my caring or fervent daring that made me endure Satan's thunder.



In the story I read every Christmas, old Scrooge fulfills our hopes and good wish list, that love will blaze strong in hearts turned from wrong and heaven we will not resist. When I spoke the same tale to my daughters, even as we endured our own slaughter, A chill ran through me for I saw so surely how a new spirit had not moved our tormenter.



I once thought we are born with a soul, and compassion that never grows cold,
But our substance grows from the blows that we know and makes us ever more bold.
I learned the strength that pain brought me, and how seeking the lost made me see
that our lives are not our own but must be forged arm in arm toward the new society.



Death holds all the answers, says the tale, but that helps not our present travails.
For mystery reigns whatever we gain, and the Great Cosmic Shrug prevails.
Then what do we have but each other? Held as dear as a mother or brother?
If we forsake but a one, we shall fall, everyone, and our Soul will be held by another.

So I stretch out my arms to you all, past the dead legions that seek you to enthrall,
The judgement is nigh, for those low and high, caused by none others than us all.
If this be our ending, forego talk of mending, and face who we are so we be free.
A new bud may yet flourish, and by heaven be nourished, in divine-human solidarity.

Written on the eve of my 67th birthday.

February 10, 2023



Kevin Annett and his father Bill, 2017

